



Tsavkisi Panorama

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Ekaterina Schulmann's Russia Diagnosis

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA TAVBERIDZE

Ekaterina Schulmann is a Russian political scientist specializing in legislative processes. She was an associate professor at RANEPa from 2013 to 2022 and an associate professor at the Moscow School for the Social and Economic Sciences from 2021 to 2022. She currently serves as an associate fellow of Chatham House, Radio Free Europe/RL's Georgian Service sat down with her to discuss Russian values and the changing attitudes to the war.

WE ALL KNOW WHO THE TOP MAN IS IN RUSSIA, BUT WHO IS SECOND AND HOW MUCH SWAY AND POWER DO THEY HOLD?

I've called Russia a "bureaucratic autocracy." It's a personalist autocracy in strict political science classification. We don't have a ruling party like party autocracies, Russia is not run by a military junta like military autocracies, and we don't have an established succession mechanism that monarchies have. So, we're a personalist autocracy: Power is concentrated in the hands of the leader and his immediate surroundings. However, we're a big country that can't be run by a president and his five friends alone.

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Ekaterina Schulmann. Source: carnegieendowment.org

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MARKETS		STOCKS		COMMODITIES		CURRENCIES		
Price	w/w	m/m	Price	w/w	m/m	Price	w/w	m/m
As of 13-Aug-2024								
GEONC 04/26	93.58 (YTM 8.84%)	+0.2%	+1.5%	Bank of Georgia (BGEO LN)	GBP 40.05	+0.6%	-8.8%	
GBAIL 04/28	88.96 (YTM 7.35%)	+0.4%	+0.5%	Georgia Capital (GCEO LN)	GBP 9.52	-2.5%	-12.7%	
GEBOG 9/12 PERP	97.79 (YTM 9.47%)	+0.0%	+0.2%	TBC Bank Group (TBCG LN)	GBP 27.80	+0.5%	-5.6%	
SILNET 01/27	99.92 (YTM 8.41%)	+0.1%	+0.0%					
TBC 10/775 PERP	100.59 (YTM 11.27%)	+0.2%	+0.6%	Crude Oil, Brent (US\$/bbl)	80.69	+5.5%	-5.1%	
TBC 8.894 PERP	95.77 (YTM 11.26%)	+0.1%	+0.3%	Gold Spot (US\$/OZ)	2,465.16	+3.1%	+2.2%	
TBC 10/1/4 PERP	98.53 (YTM 10.61%)	+0.1%	+0.2%					
SP 500	5,434.43	+3.7%	-3.2%	USD / GEL	2,6969	-0.3%	-1.0%	
FTSE 250	20,744.08	+1.8%	-2.2%	EUR / GEL	2,9647	+0.3%	-0.2%	
DOW JONES 30	39,765.64	+2.0%	-0.6%	GBP / GEL	3,4668	+1.0%	-2.0%	
Russell 2000	2,095.19	+1.5%	-2.5%	EUR / USD	1,0993	+0.6%	+0.8%	
FTSE 100	8,235.23	+2.6%	-0.2%	GBP / USD	1,2862	+1.3%	-1.0%	



Renowned Culinary Blogger Lukas Galgenmüller Prepares Youtube Vlog about Georgia

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

Famous culinary blogger Lukas Galgenmüller has prepared a Youtube vlog about Georgia, naming it '120-hour Georgian gastronomic tour - the hidden treasure of the Caucasus.' Galgenmüller traveled to Georgia as part of a tour organized by the Georgian National Tourism Administration, and the result is a 2-hour YouTube vlog about Georgia's culinary tourism, local cuisine and various other treasures. It is good news for promoting Georgia, as Lucas Galgenmüller has more than 2 million followers on social media.

New 1800m Tunnel on Rikoti Pass Opens, Rehabilitation of Old Tunnel Begins



The Rikoti tunnels, old and new. Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

The Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Irakli Karseladze, this week announced that the construction of the new eastern entrance tunnel to the Rikoti Pass, a vital part of Georgia's East-West highway, was completed. The new tunnel, measuring 1800 meters in length, runs parallel to the existing Rikoti tunnel and is now the longest on the Rikoti Pass road. The old Rikoti Tunnel, which opened in 1982 as the longest vehicular tunnel entirely within Georgia,

at 1722 m, is now being renovated to be used as part of the new highway. The Ministry announced that 36 kilometers of the new highway are now already operational, including 77 bridges and 43 tunnels. Overall, the project involves 51 tunnels and 97 bridges, of which 50 tunnels and 89 bridges have already been completed. By upgrading sections of the E60 and E70 highways, particularly the Poti-Tbilisi-Red Bridge and Poti-Batumi-Sarpi routes, and by bypassing cities and towns, Georgia seeks to solidify its role as a pivotal transport hub in the South Caucasus region. Work on the Batumi Bypass is well on its way to a year-end completion, project financiers claim.

GORBI: If Elections Were Held this Week, 59.3% of Respondents Would Vote for GD

GORBI published the results of a public opinion survey on the order of pro-government Imedi TV company on Thursday. In the survey, respondents were asked: If the parliamentary elections were held this week, who would you vote for? As a result of the received answers, the political ratings of the parties were allocated as follows:

Georgian Dream - 59.3%,
United National Movement / Strategy Aghmashenebeli - 13.1%,
Coalition Lelo / Ana Dolidze - For People / Freedom Square - 5.8%,
Coalition Akhali / Girchi - more freedom / Droa - 5.5%,
For Georgia - 4.8%,
Coalition of Patriots Alliance of Georgia / Alt Info - 3%,
European Georgia - 2.2%.

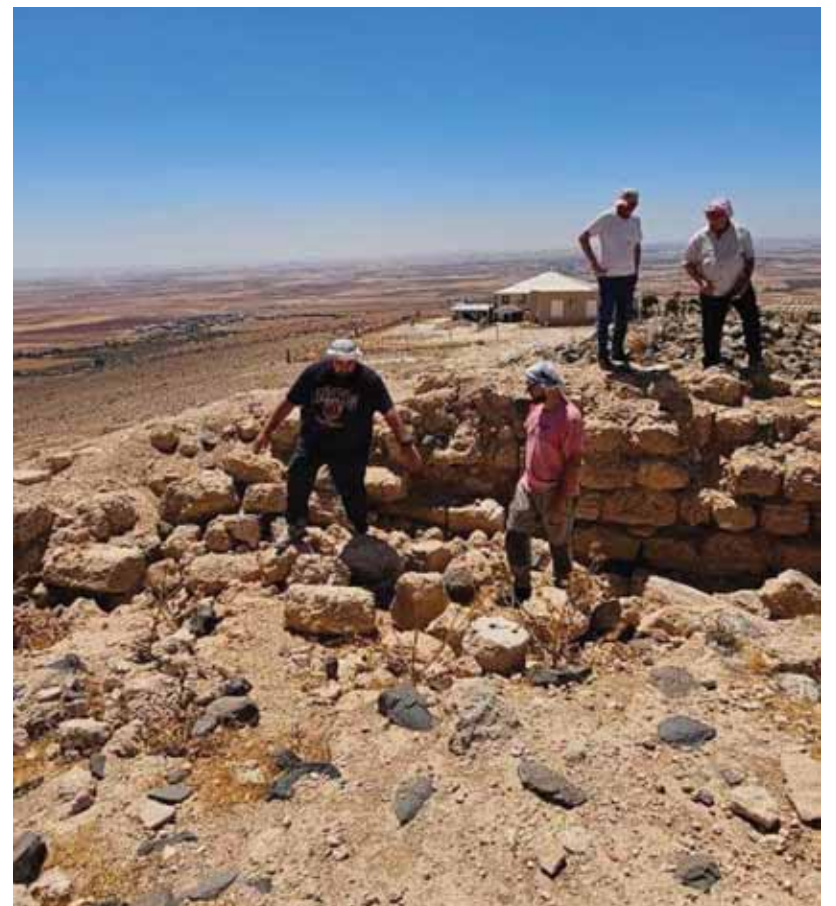
New Political Center Girchi - 2.1%,
Other - 4.2%.
Based on the information provided by Imedi, the survey of public opinion was conducted across the country by the method of face-to-face interviews in the period from July 24 to August 4. A total of 1700 respondents were interviewed. The margin of error of the data is +/-3%. GORBI is a global research, analysis, and consulting company.



Georgian Archaeologists Head to Jordan to Plan Works on Georgian Desert Monastery Ruins

BY TEAM GT

A team of Georgian archaeologists has travelled to Jordan to plan archaeological work on the ruins of the Georgian desert monastery located on Mount Shihan in the city of Karak, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia reports. This initiative follows an agreement made in July during a working visit by Georgia's Minister of Culture to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Led by Tbilisi State University Professor Vakhtang Licheli, the team will carry out reconnaissance archaeological work and develop a comprehensive plan for large-scale archaeological activities on the site. They are working in collaboration with local archaeologists and representatives from the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The Georgian desert monastery on Mount Shihan was established in the 11th century by the Georgian cleric Gabriel Tbileli, and existed until the 13th century. The site holds significant historical value. Several manuscripts from the monastery are preserved in the library of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



Ukraine Latest: Kursk Offensive Advances as Belgorod Declares Emergency

COMPILED BY ANA DUMBADZE

The Ukrainian president on Wednesday night said his forces continue to advance in Russia's Kursk region, and that they had moved forward between 1 and 2km in various directions since the start of the day.

"We have captured more than 100 Russian servicemen during this period," he said. "I am grateful to everyone involved; this will accelerate our people being able to come home."

Further, Ukraine's overnight operation this week targeting four Russian military airfields marked its largest long-range drone raid of the war, a Ukrainian security source said.

The attack, which targeted Russia's Voronezh, Kursk, Savasleyka and Borisoglebsk air bases, aimed to undermine Moscow's ability to use warplanes for gliding bomb attacks on Ukraine, the source said.

The Reuters news agency said it could not immediately independently verify the claim. Ukraine was still assessing the scale of damage, the source said.

HOW MUCH RUSSIAN TERRITORY DOES UKRAINE NOW CONTROL?

As of Monday, Ukraine controlled at least 800sq km of territory in Russia's Kursk region, according to an analysis by AFP using data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW).

Ukraine's army chief, Oleksandr Syrskii, said Kyiv controls about 1,000sq km of Kursk on Monday.

Russia has admitted that Ukrainian



A multi-story residential building in Kursk, Russia, was hit, according to local authorities, by debris from a destroyed Ukrainian missile in the course of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Source: Anatoliy Zhdanov/Kommersant Photo via Reuters

units have driven deep into the country, saying on Sunday they had reached as far as 30km from the border.

At least 28 Kursk villages are now under Ukraine's control, the region's governor reported on Monday.

Kyiv was also in control of at least the western part of Sudzha, with the central and eastern parts contested "grey zones," ISW reported in an assessment on Monday.

Ukraine made its biggest gains in the first two days of the incursion, penetrating "at least two Russian defensive lines," ISW said on August 7.

ISW later reported that since Russia has rushed reinforcements to the area, the rate of Ukraine's advance into the region has slowed. Indeed, Russia is saying it has thwarted attempts by Ukrainian forces to push deeper into five areas in the Kursk region.

"The attempts by enemy mobile units using armored equipment to break through deeper into Russian territory have been repelled," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement, adding its troops shot down 117 Ukrainian drones within Russian territory overnight, mostly in the Kursk, Voronezh, Belgorod and Nizhny Novgorod regions.

It said four tactical missiles had also been downed, and showed Sukhoi Su-34 bombers striking Ukrainian positions in the Kursk region.

Later, the ministry said Russian forces had repelled a series of Ukrainian attacks inside the Kursk region, including at Russkoye Porechnoye 18km from the border, and pro-Russian war bloggers said the front "had been stabilized," while Russia's National Guard said it was beefing up security at the Kursk nuclear power plant, located just 35km

from the fighting.

Meanwhile, Zelensky is eyeing setting up military administrations in the Kursk region. He held a meeting on the security and humanitarian situation in the region following the Ukrainian military's cross-border assault.

"Security, humanitarian aid, creation of military administrations if necessary," he said on Telegram, posting a video of the meeting with top Ukrainian officials.

RUSSIA 'NEEDS TO DO SOMETHING VERY RADICAL' TO PUSH OUT UKRAINE FORCES

Pavel Felgenhauer, the defense analyst and columnist at Novaya Gazeta, says the Kremlin is in "a bit of a dilemma" over what to do next.

During the offensive of many months in the Donbas, Russia has run out of battle-ready reserves, he told Al Jazeera, adding that in order to push Ukrainian forces out, "they need to do something very radical, and it's not clear how that's going to be done."

"Of course, Moscow does not want to pull out from pieces of Donbas, which were taken back through such a loss of money and lives, to push the Ukrainians out of Kursk," Felgenhauer said. "It's a bit of a dilemma now for the Kremlin what comes next, and it's a dilemma for the Ukrainians what they do next."

US President Joe Biden agreed that it is indeed a dilemma for Russia, making comments about Russian President Vladimir Putin, and noting that he has been briefed every four to five hours for the past six to eight days on Ukraine's incursion.

The White House said Ukraine did not provide advance notice of its planned move, and Spokesperson Karine Jean-

Pierre said Washington had no involvement in the operation.

"We had nothing to do with this," she said. "We have no involvement. We'll continue to have conversations with the Ukrainians about their approach, but it is really for them to speak to."

POLAND RECEIVES GERMAN WARRANT TO MAKE ARREST FOR NORD STREAM ATTACK

Poland's National Public Prosecutor's Office this week confirmed it had received a European arrest warrant by German authorities related to an attack on the Nord Stream gas pipelines.

Germany has urged Warsaw to arrest a Ukrainian diving instructor who was allegedly part of a team that blew up the pipelines two years ago, according to reports in German media.

The Polish prosecution said he was not arrested in Poland as he had left the territory for Ukraine in early July.

Source: ALJAZEERA



President Zelensky. Source: Zelensky's X page

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Oh the Cruel Cynicism of the World!

BLOG BY NUGZAR B. RUHADZE

Volumes have been written about the philosophy, sociology and psychology of war per se. The best minds of humankind have described the brutality of wars and the meanness of historical war-mongers. The world is familiar with the tragic statistical veracity produced by continuous warfare from time immemorial to now, and all in vain: Man, still killing Man, refuses to make reasonable conclusions from the bygone carnage and devastations.

And the slaughter of humans for preposterous reasons persists as the 21st century moves well into its years. I don't have to go very far to find corroboration for those trivial, yet very topical thoughts and words. At this very moment, I am a little away from the Russian capital, aboard a cruiser, sailing down the gorgeous Volga River. The vessel is packed full with ready-to-rock-and-roll, joyful passengers of all ages; a big bunch of Russian middle-class couples and singles enjoying enviable, 5-day touristic fun, indulgently immersing themselves in the luxurious amenities of a comfy, sizable ship called The Little Prince. I have never seen Russian men and women so well dressed, coifed, trimmed and titted, all of them clad in modern western apparel and footwear, stylishly rolling their glitzy suitcases to their cabins,



The Little Prince cruise ship. Source: ets-russiatravel

where further pleasures are in store for them. The greatest venue of this pleasurable pastime and gratifying standard of living is the dining hall, where food and service are on the level of the best American cruises of the sort, complete with a glass or two of courtesy champagne and vodka. Laughing and merry-making are ubiquitous, and birthdays are celebrated too.

The impression is that these happy dwellers of The Little Prince, anchored at Kostroma right now, don't even have a clue that just 457 miles away from here, bloody clashes are taking place in the vicinity of Kursk between Russian and

Ukrainian forces, Man relentlessly annihilating Man, to saying nothing of the rest of the war theater. These happy passengers may well be aware that Russia has its daggers drawn against Ukraine, but they seem to be taking the dire reality with amazing nonchalance, if not with a veneer of morbid indifference.

We hear about the war more often and with higher intensity in Georgia than they do here in Russia. The Russian means of mass communication certainly talk about it, but it is far from the main topic on the hundreds of various television and radio stations. Indeed, the country is living its regular life, and mass



Russian tourists look at a cruise ship. Photo by Dmitiri Beliakov for The Guardian

media continues to reflect that life as it happens.

Yet, we have to recognize that the people of this country can't help it: they want to be happy, and they don't want to give up on the chance to build a better life for themselves and their children. They might know that war is bad, but they also know that being alive and having fun is good. This paradox begets the cruel cynicism with which the entire world eyes this absurd war, its having already taken hundreds of thousands of young lives. War? Why should I care as long as my son, dad or brother are safe from it? Somebody's dying? So what?

The level of cynical evaluation of this contemporary tragedy is mind-boggling. Understandably, Russia cannot shut down. Even in devastated Ukraine, people are eating, drinking and multiplying, notwithstanding the level of human misfortune. In a word, most of the world, including the country where I am right now, seems to be taking it easy.

Any war is full of cruelty, and we humans are used to it, but the cruelty of the cynicism that is seen through the entire destructive process is something heavier, and heavier it is because war is war, but our attitude towards war is part of our morality – either lofty or base.

Opposition MP Nika Melia Attacked During Samtredia Leg of Election Campaign



The attacker strikes out at Melia. Screenshot from video. Source: OC Media

BY TEAM GT

On Sunday, Nika Melia, the co-chair of the opposition party Akhali and a member of the Coalition for Change, which includes the Droa and Girchi - More Freedom parties, was attacked while campaigning in Samtredia, a town in western Georgia. During an interview with the media, Melia was punched by an assailant who then quickly fled the scene. He has yet to be apprehended, though the Ministry of Internal Affairs claims the investigation is ongoing.

The attack sparked condemnation from Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, who described the incident as "unacceptable" and emphasized the need for a peaceful election environment.

Kobakhidze urged everyone to avoid such acts of violence, yet, his remarks come amid ongoing criticism that the ruling Georgian Dream party may be encouraging violence against political opponents.

Earlier this year, Parliamentary Speaker Shalva Papuashvili faced criticism for comments that were perceived as inciting violence against opposition figures. In a January speech, Papuashvili suggested that opposition leaders might face consequences for "sacrificing people to war, destruction, and death," "no matter what town, village, or neighborhood they visit."

Furthermore, several government critics, including politicians, activists, and journalists, have reported harassment or attacks they believe are orchestrated by the government. To date, Georgian law enforcement agencies have not identified or held accountable those responsible for these incidents.

Trying to Build Bridges – Senator Shaheen and Congressman Mike Turner Visit Georgia



Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister of Georgia meeting US Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Congressman Mike Turner. Source: gov.ge

BY TEAM GT

American Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Chairman of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, Mike Turner, were in Georgia this week, visiting the representatives of the Georgian Government, representatives of the opposition parties and the non-governmental sector.

"In order to return to the right path, the first step should be taken by the Government of Georgia. We are waiting for its proposals," Shaheen said in her first statement on arrival.

"In light of the increasingly aggressive actions of authoritarian nations like Russia, which invaded Georgia 16 years ago, it is important that we reaffirm the United States' strong support for the right of the Georgian people to have a country that can determine its own future," the Senator said. "During our meetings here with government officials and civil society organizations, we once again committed to support the aspirations of the Georgian people towards European integration - but we also stated that we will not be inactive in the face of democratic backsliding and false statements aimed at the United States."

She claimed that the first step to returning to the right path should be taken by the Government of Georgia.

"We need to see free and fair elections and a good-faith effort to repeal the Foreign Agents Act, which is doing more harm than good to the country as we move forward with our EU membership agenda. The first step to return to the right path should be taken by the Government of Georgia, and we are waiting for its proposals."

Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister of Georgia, said the government had already told its colleagues very clearly how they saw the reset of Georgian-American relations.

"It is important that in the next year, we not see such processes as those we have seen in the last four years, for example, what the former American Ambassador was doing. Resetting relations requires a fair, correct, healthy approach. Steps have been taken on our side, we are in standby mode, we are waiting for reciprocal steps to be taken by our American colleagues."

Mamuka Mdinardze, parliamentary majority leader of the Georgian Dream party criticized the visiting congressman, citing Google as labelling Mike Turner as "one of the most corrupt congressmen."

"It is sad that such people come and

give critical assessment to the Georgian Dream."

Mayor of the capital, Kakha Kaladze, told journalists that, "At the level of statements, what we heard from them was a campaign of lies about the transparency law. They claimed that transparency is bad. When I'm doing something wrong, if you're my friend, you should tell me what I'm doing wrong. We did not hear any arguments about the law, they only had one answer: 'because.' That is not the right attitude. We respect the strategic partners of the country, we are ready for friendship and cooperation, but it should be mutual. I think that these relations have reached a dead end and need to be restarted. The Government of Georgia is taking concrete steps to deepen existing relations," Kaladze concluded.

Opposition MP Zurab Japaridze, of the Girchi More Freedom/Coalition for Change party told media that they had understood from the visiting VIPs that "no reset can happen until the Russian law is withdrawn, and until the anti-Western propaganda is stopped."

"That Ivanishvili himself did not meet them is telling," Japaridze said. "But the fact that the senators themselves underlined this shows that everything has been revealed, that they know exactly who is managing the processes in this country, who is the source of all these problems."

Lt. Col. Vano Nadiradze, Head of the Georgian Group in the Ukrainian Special Ops, on Ukraine's Latest Offensive

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA TAVBERIDZE FOR THE DAILY MAIL

We asked Lt. Col. Vano Nadiradze, the head of the Georgian group in the Ukrainian special operations forces, to summarize the operation that started on August

6 in the territory of Russia bordering Ukraine, and which now has branched into two ongoing directions: Kursk and Belgorod. Nadiradze, talking to the Daily Mail from an unspecified location in Ukraine's Sumy region, claims that he participated in the planning of the current operations, while his fighters were directly involved in the fighting.

"This operation was two months in the making, extensive planning, reconnaissance, extensive work at the border to make the initial push as successful as possible," he tells us. "Everything was planned meticulously, to the last detail. And this time, everything was and remained classified, unlike the much maligned counter-offensive last year, where even the last intern in the Kremlin knew what Ukraine was planning to do and they had ample time to prepare. Now they were caught unaware - the element of surprise in the battle cannot be underestimated. And here, I must pay Gen. Sirskyi his due. I will say plainly: His predecessor, Gen. Zaluzhny was a great tactician, but not a strategist. Sirskyi is a strategist. He is also the man to whom I owe my life, as it was him who made it possible for us to get out of the encirclement of Debaltsevo, back in 2015, alive. Then there was the defense of Kyiv during Zaluzhny's tenure, the successful counter-offensives in Kherson and Kharkiv, the lot. Unfortunately, when Sirskyi took over, it coincided with the delay of the US military aid package that allowed Russians to take over the initiative along the entire frontline. But I would say we've now seized the initiative back."

ON HOW HE ENDED UP IN UKRAINE

I've been here since 2014, when Russia took Crimea, and I've been fighting for Ukraine ever since. I have been awarded various honors, including "National Hero of Ukraine."

ON WHAT'S GOING ON NOW AND WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

This was a masterful maneuver that yielded several massive benefits, in various dimensions.

First, these were the territories from which Rus-

sia carried out aerial bombardment and artillery barrage fire against the Sumy and Kharkiv regions-Ukrainian territories. Now, we've created a buffer zone and lifted the pressure on those regions.

Second, this alleviated the pressure in the Donetsk direction, where the situation was becoming critical. Russia was forced to send five convoys from the Donetsk lines to defend Kursk. The Russians made a big mistake right there, because none of those five convoys reached Kursk in their original composition: along the way, our drones and Himars did an absolute number on them. Now they are sending more forces. Well, we are here, and we are waiting for them, let them come.

Third, and this is probably the most important geopolitical aspect of it: it's becoming increasingly evident that come autumn, there will be an increased likelihood for some sort of negotiations - this maneuver, seizing these territories, allows Ukraine to have a much stronger hand in whatever negotiations might be forthcoming. We are already 10 kilometers from Kurchatov. There, we will fortify our positions, dig trenches and dig deep. There is a nuclear power plant in Kurchatov, but Ukraine is not going to attack the plant. Ukraine is not a terrorist state, unlike Russia, which seized the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant.

Fourth, that's probably for our friends in the West: We showed them, once more, just how vulnerable Russia is and how it will back down only when you stand up to it. As the popular saying goes, we have shown the world that the Russian army, once thought to be the second best in the world, is in fact the second best even in Russia. We are already able to detect the launch points of their Iskander missiles and Korean missiles which Russia launches towards Ukraine. We can destroy the launch sites of these ballistic missiles because the missiles themselves are very difficult to destroy in the air.

The main thing is that the Western countries give us the right to use their missiles and weapons on the territory of Russia, and that includes the British Storm Shadows, for which we are very grateful to the UK - they were the first to do it, and others followed. It would be brilliant to see Britain seizing the initiative in this as well. And also, on the F-16s: We've got 10 so far, and it has had such a tremendous impact, but we need more. I would implore the West, the UK, Germany, France, to give us more, if they want to see Ukraine succeed.

WHERE UKRAINE GOES NEXT AND THE RUSSIAN RESISTANCE

The main push is in the Belgorod direction; we



Lt. Col. Vano Nadiradze. Source: Daily Mail

are expanding there. The Russians are throwing more and more forces over here, and the battles are intensifying. But the losses, I'd say, are one to ten in our favor. We've got more than 2000 Russians as prisoners, and they aren't just conscripts, these are competent fighters, including FSB forces, that will later be exchanged for our guys, especially for the defenders of Mariupol. The initial resistance was kind of nullified, because the Akhmat [essentially the Russian army branch under Chechen warlord Kadyrov] was tasked with overseeing these territories and we managed to completely dupe them and circumvent them during the initial entry and ended up in

their rear.

Our anti-radar systems worked wonders, with the help of the Western equipment I might say, to basically make it impossible for the Russian drones to fly. And you can see the extent of our success in Russia already: You can see the absolute hysteria among the Russian military experts and bloggers. You can see the fear on Putin's face, on Russian TV. Can you imagine that? Could you have imagined that? Putin's face, where he seems to be in absolute turmoil and about to lose it, on Russian TV, as the Kursk governor is briefing him that Ukrainian forces are rapidly expanding into Russian territory. That was vivid.



Source: ISW (21:00 GMT, 13 August)



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Ekaterina Schulmann's Russia Diagnosis

Continued from page 1

In my opinion, the one real institution of Russia is its bureaucracy, both civic and armed. People change, institutions remain; this is the technical definition of an institution. So we don't have a vertical in the sense that you have the second man, the third man, the fourth man, etc. We have the first person and then after that empty space. We have these big clans, and it's the job of an autocrat to preserve the balance. He's an arbiter of intra-elite conflict, though he's not very good at it.

It has always been the case in Russia's history that people are abundant, but money is scarce. Hard currency, gold, or foreign currency have value; people have no value whatsoever.

DOES THE JOB INCLUDE MAKING SURE THAT NO SECOND MAN EVER EMERGES?

Yes, exactly. So that no second clan or primus inter pares emerges. You have those clans and you try to keep them there, not allowing anyone to become the first and gain inordinate power.

AND ARE THE CLANS VYING FOR SECOND STATUS AFTER THE TSAR, OR ARE THEY VYING TO BECOME THE TSAR THEMSELVES? WHAT ARE THE MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM GOALS IF YOU ARE A CLAN VYING FOR POWER IN PUTIN'S "COURT"?

I don't like this monarchy metaphor; I think it's misleading. Of course it's natural to call a man a tsar if he's been in his position for 25 years. But a monarchy, first and foremost, has a formal succession mechanism. We don't have that.

I'd look at this clan system from the resource-based angle: They're vying for resources. They need to preserve their resource base, at a minimum. At a maximum, they need to expand. That's what this power game is all about. Of course, the clan which manages to install a successor of its own wins the game. But now that's only a distant perspective. Before that, they have to "run twice as fast" to stay in place, like in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, to preserve their resources or to grab other people's belongings.

A YEAR AGO, IN AN INTERVIEW, YOU SAID THAT THINKING WAR HAS BECOME THE NORM IN RUSSIA WOULD BE A MISTAKE. IS THIS STILL TRUE AFTER PRIGOZHIN'S DEMISE, NAVALNY'S DEATH, RUSSIAN FORTUNES SEEMINGLY TURNING FOR THE BETTER IN THE WAR, AND PUTIN SEEMINGLY GROWING STRONGER DOMESTICALLY?

I think that accustoming themselves to



In Russia, hard currency, gold, or foreign currency have value; people have no value whatsoever

a war and being tired of it appear to be one and the same thing. We know from sociological data that war ceased to be popular with the majority of Russians approximately by the end of 2023. Still, support is concentrated in the elder demographic. The main concern expressed by respondents is that it is taking so long, they don't understand why it should be taking so long.

TO WIN?

It's not "why is it taking so long for us to win?" It's not about losing or stopping the war. In a situation of military censorship and lack of public discussion, it's hard to know exactly what people mean. But we can assume the majority would be glad to have this war over. They don't understand all the implications of it. They can't picture all the consequences, but they are tired of living in constant anxiety and unpredictability. They're afraid of the new mobilization. They don't like Belgorod being bombed.

Some of them might say the only way to stop Belgorod from being bombed is to take Kyiv, but the idea of the majority is that an end to the war would be a good thing. Some of them say the war should end with our victory: "That's why we want the war to end, because the end means we have won." But I suspect this is something like lip service, the right thing to say, the socially approved answer. Because you can't very well say, "I want this war to end no matter how it ends."

And for the elites, since we're not in a democracy, what people want doesn't matter much. But the mood of the elites is fluid, they're not very strategic people. For example, a couple of months ago the general idea among the elites was that "we'll just have to hold on through the end of 2024 and then Donald the savior will come and make everything right for Russia." This has changed. There isn't much hope in Donald Trump any longer.

So there's been much more talk about an agreement. I'd describe it like this, which may seem paradoxical but I hope you'll understand what I mean: The elites love the state of war, because it strengthens their position internally. They have more money than they had previously, they have more political sovereignty. They like the besieged fortress situation, which again simplifies internal policy management. They like everything except the actual military action, because it's unpredictable, it's costly, it elevates people like Prigozhin, it creates constant anxiety, and it costs a lot of money, and some of this money goes to the people and they don't like that, they don't like paying that much.

The Russian state has never paid that much money to its people for anything - for their work, for their life, for their death, for whatever. The idea that Russia is a country of limitless resources is a propaganda picture. But the strange thing, and it is so strange that we can't realize it, is this: It has always been the case in Russia's history that people are abundant, but money is scarce.

Hard currency, gold, or foreign currency have value; people have no value whatsoever. "We have as much human capital as we need." Now it's the other way around. I can't adequately explain to you, I can't even explain to myself what a gamechanger it is. They don't understand it themselves, because they've never seen anything like this.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA, RUSSIA HAS TO PAY FOR DEAD RUSSIANS.

Exactly, and we don't have enough Rus-



Ekaterina Schulmann. Source: Die Bild

sians. We have more money than we know what to do with, but we don't have the people, either on the front lines or back home. We have a huge labor deficit, and very slowly there comes a realization that you can't pay 1.25 million rubles to a person who in two weeks' time will be killed in a senseless "meat grinder," as the expression goes.

The army management doesn't understand this yet. The political leadership doesn't understand it yet, but is slowly beginning to realize it. I don't know what the implications will be; I can only tell you as a social scientist that it's a huge change.

IT WAS SAID THAT RUSSIAN MOTHERS WILL RISE UP "WHEN THE COFFINS START FLOWING HOME." OVER TWO YEARS INTO THE WAR AND SOME HALF A MILLION DEAD RUSSIAN SOLDIERS LATER, WE DON'T SEE RUSSIAN MOTHERS IN THE STREETS MUCH. WHERE ARE THEY?

It's typical for generals to form their estimation based on previous experiences. There was a soldiers' mothers' movement during and after the Soviet-era Afghanistan war and the two Chechen wars, because those wars were waged with conscripts, and anyone can become a conscript. It was a death toll that implicated the whole social base; every social stratum could be affected. This war is run on strictly feudal lines, on the lines of, I would say, wild capitalism. It's a market arrangement. Money is paid and you go voluntarily.

YOU'RE NOT CORRALLED INTO IT; YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR IT.

Of course. Even the mobilized, unless they were very stupid - and some of them were, though it was not their fault, they just had no education so couldn't understand their rights and the consequences of their actions - but mostly people knew what they were after: money. Money for themselves; money for their families.

There's a movement of the wives of the mobilized that, in fairness, we have

to mention. And it has been impossible to either quash it or, as is more customary for the Russian political machine, to take it over. So they had to declare it a "foreign agent," which is kind of ridiculous. And I read that designation as an admission of defeat. They could do nothing with it, so they were driven to a ridiculous decision.

So Putin took a soldier and he got killed defending Russia's interests, but apparently his wife is a "foreign agent" for wanting her husband back home. This is, again, self-defeating. We need to mention this movement and not dismiss it, it's important; but it hasn't become a widespread one.

DO YOU THINK IT WILL?

It will if the payments are stopped.

A YEAR AGO, WHEN THE WAR DIDN'T SEEM TO BE GOING IN RUSSIA'S FAVOR, THERE WAS MUCH TALK ABOUT INFLECTING STRATEGIC DEFEAT ON RUSSIA AND RUSSIA BEING WEAKENED AS A RESULT OF THIS WAR. IS THIS STILL IN THE CARDS?

I can't talk about military matters, I don't have the expertise. But I can tell you one thing as a social scientist and as a Russia watcher: Whatever factor we take, be it the labor crisis that I mentioned, the demographic situation, the economic imbalances, the aging of personalist rule, the infighting of the clans, where now everyone has a little private army of their own, each and every one of these factors and all of them in combination are factors of long-term decline.

As a Russian citizen, as a Russian educator, I get no pleasure at all in saying this. The question that I get is whether this or that event or occurrence or tendency will, in stark terms, upset Putin or defeat Russia; and the answer is no, not immediately. But none of them will go away. It will be a country with an aging society, with a disbalanced economy, with an incompetent leadership, and these are the factors of inevitable decline. It's very bad. It's bad for the country; it's bad for the continent.



Putin will leave a brutalized society with a higher crime rate and all positive social tendencies reversed, from alcohol consumption to violent crime

SHOULD ONE BE AFRAID OF WEAKENING RUSSIA, AS MANY IN THE WEST SEEM TO BE?

One shouldn't be clutching at Putin as the devil we know and an antidote to chaos. He is an agent of chaos. The longer he stays, the worse the legacy he will leave.

He will leave behind a deinstitutionalized system that is based wholly on personal relations, and when these people disappear, those relations will be nullified. He will leave a brutalized society with a higher crime rate and all positive social tendencies reversed, from alcohol consumption to violent crime. So the longer he stays, the worse it will be afterwards.

These so-called long reigns, long personalist reigns, are very often followed by what we call in Russian history a "time of troubles," a "smuta." It's not inevitable, but it's highly possible. Perhaps we'll somehow wiggle out of this crisis without unduly endangering our own lives and the safety of Eurasia, but that's not guaranteed.

The Dancer Disappears

BLOG BY TONY HANMER

I have had the privilege of observing the enigmatic man, arms outstretched, one leg bent, his torso half-covered by a two-pointed flag, emerging from the snow on the mountain "wall" opposite our Etseri house each July. I learned the story of how the Svans in the area believed that whichever part of him lasts the longest before melting, the village it points to will have the best fortune in the coming year.

I wrote the story, too, of how the young men of Etseri used to trek up that steep wall with shovels, only in order to try to twist good luck their way by breaking up all the other parts to make them melt faster, leaving only the straight leg pointing down towards our village. This is all true; they really did this, though they no longer do now. But my account of how the Dancer is really alive, and tries to warn the youths of their foolishness by avalanching down on them but letting them survive... that's my own invention.

Having known the Dancer's history for a few years now, I have documented photographically his coming and going ever since. All the snow on the Wall melts in the hot summer sun, with the exception of the peak and glaciers of Mount Lamaria, which is higher and further back than the Wall itself, though appearing joined to it. But this year might be the first time I have been here to see the very day when exactly nothing is left of the Dancer. This allows me to test the story of which of his extremities, left to natural processes, will actually survive



the longest. Today is the day, as I write this, when that smallest dot vanishes.

I have also seen, and need to add the detail into my story, that if the Dancer ever feels like leaving the question frustratingly open, he can. All he has to do is summon cloud towards the end of his yearly life, hide behind it, and do his final melting unseen. This capriciousness seems to be rare, however, although there

is nothing but the averages of weather to gainsay it.

I check from the windows of our house each day... see his form slowly distinguish itself from the rest of the snow... observe the days when it is at its best, truest to form... then notice how it gets smaller and breaks up into pieces, bit by bit, with agonizing patience. There has not yet been a July when a freak snow-

storm has turned back time on the Wall. Nor one when unending rain has hastened the Dancer's demise. (The disastrous July blizzard of 1928, I think it was, recorded on film in Salt for Svanetia and available on Youtube, may or may not have altered things here. Ditto the terrifying three weeks of late winter 1986/7, during which the snow fell here without stopping and you could walk off the roof

of our two-story house straight onto snow. I haven't yet asked about these two freak years).

Another thing which might affect the Dancer's annual arrival and departure is Climate Change. Time will tell. Yet another factor is the usually slow but sometimes sudden erosion of the nearly vertical, thin layers of slate comprising much of the Wall. If a big enough section collapsed from meltwater getting into those layers and then freezing, the Dancer might go for good, or become someone or something else entirely. A new legend might then be born too.

I have to seize my moments, in summer, between helping my wife look after anywhere from zero to 25 or so guests a day in our home, booked in advance or showing up (smaller numbers only) unplanned, taking their chances. But the taking of a photo is quick, and the procession of clouds and sunlight slow, so I usually can squeeze in a few seconds a day for my recording.

And now I can report that, assuming this year to be typical, it's close but definite: left to his own devices, the Dancer's downward pointing leg, directed to Etseri, will just barely survive longest of all. Whatever this means.

Tony Hanmer has lived in Georgia since 1999, in Svaneti since 2007, and been a weekly writer and photographer for GT since early 2011. He runs the "Svaneti Renaissance" Facebook group, now with over 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/. He and his wife also run their own guest house in Etseri: www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti

India's Global Climate Leadership



Manjeev S Puri, former Ambassador of India to the EU

BLOG BY MANJEEV S PURI,*
WITH TERI RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
ISHITA SRIVASTAVA

India is the world's largest country in terms of population, comprising around 17% of the global population. It is also the fifth largest economy in the world, on its way to becoming the third largest economy by 2030. Yet, its contribution to cumulative carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution are a mere 3.4% of the world total and at 2 tons its current per-capita emissions are less than half of the global average of 4.7 tons.

India's per-capita carbon footprint is also the lowest among the G-20 countries with the International Finance

Corporation (IFC) acknowledging India as the only G20 nation in line with 2-degree centigrade upper limit for global warming. Additionally, the IFC has highlighted that India's GDP grew by a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about seven per cent between 2005 and 2019, whereas the emissions grew at a CAGR of about four per cent. This would appear to underscore India's relative success in decoupling economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the emission intensity of its GDP and being a possible model for the globe in general and the global South in particular.

Leading India's determination to be part of the solution on climate change, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a five-point climate action plan (Panchamrit) for India at the UN

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Glasgow in November 2021. This included the key commitment of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070 along with four elements of the pathway. These, enumerated below, were later incorporated in India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

1. Reach 500 GW of non-fossil fuel generation by 2030
2. 50% of India's power requirements would come from renewable energy by 2030
3. Reduction of total projected carbon emissions by one billion tons till 2030
4. Reduction of the carbon intensity of the economy by 45% by 2030, over 2005 levels

Many of these goals upped the already significant targets set by India for itself following the UNFCCC meeting in Paris

in 2015. This was possible given the fact that India had achieved its NDCs well ahead of time. In-fact, in so far as use of non-fossil fuel resources for energy, India achieved 40 percent cumulative electric power installation capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy sources in 2021, nine years before the initial target year of 2030.

Further, between 2017 and 2023, India added around 100 GW of installed electric capacity, of which around 80% is attributed to non-fossil fuel-based resources. As of now, the share of non-fossil fuel-based resources in installed electricity capacity has reached 45.4 percent. And the key target of 33 percent reduction of emissions intensity of GDP by 2030, from the 2005 level, was met in 2019, 11 years ahead of time.

Apart from the four pathway elements, India has undertaken to create an additional carbon sink of between 2.5 to 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. As of date, around 1.97 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent sinks have been created putting India on track for achieving this Nationally Determined Contribution.

Two other initiatives by India are of global importance.

The first is LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment, a mass movement launched at Glasgow by Prime Minister Modi to encourage the adoption of sustainable lifestyles to address the challenges of environmental degradation and climate change. The G-20, in its communique issued in New Delhi in September 2023, emphasised the importance of behavioural and lifestyle changes as pillars in the strategic plan adopted for advancing energy efficiency across all demand sectors by 2030.

The second push by India is on the development of alternatives to carbon intensive fossil fuels. As a part of this a major effort is the National Green Hydrogen Mission which seeks, by 2030, the development of green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 million metric tons per annum with an associated

renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW. This could result in an annual abatement of nearly 50 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

India's efforts on climate change are not only domestic but also seek build global partnerships. At the UNFCCC meeting in Paris in 2015, India joined hands with France and launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) which today has 119 signatories to its framework agreement and is in the forefront of deploying solar energy solutions in the global South to mitigate climate change. India's huge domestic efforts on pushing solar power have led to majorly reducing the cost of solar power and hence vastly increasing interest in its adoption at home and acting as a model across the global South.

In 2019, India established the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure which led to the launch at Glasgow in 2021 of the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), a flagship initiative designed to achieve and deliver resilience and climate adaptation solutions to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). At the UNFCCC meeting in Dubai in 2023, India collaborated with Sweden and launched the second phase of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (Lead IT) 2.0 and at the G-20 Summit in Delhi India joined many countries across the globe in launching the Global Biofuels Alliance.

India through its ambitious policies, successful renewable energy growth trajectory, along with effective achievement of international commitments has strongly demonstrated climate leadership at the global level. With climate change being seen by many as the defining challenge of our times, India's has assumed a pivotal role in tackling climate change, both in terms of its actions and as the leading voice of the global south for sustainability.

*Manjeev S Puri is the former Ambassador of India to EU & Lead Negotiator at UNFCCC and a Distinguished Fellow at TERI (The Energy & Resources Institute, New Delhi)

Tsavkisi Panorama: Tbilisi's Premier Eco-Friendly Residential Oasis



Gegi Vasadze, Managing Partner

The Tsavkisi Panorama residential development has reached a significant milestone, marking the culmination of a carefully planned and executed vision for modern living. With construction now complete and residents beginning to move in, the opportunity to secure a residence in this exceptional community is dwindling rapidly. Only three land plots remain available out of ninety-eight, making it a unique and limited chance for prospective homeowners to embrace a harmonious blend of contemporary comfort and serene natural surroundings.

A VISION FOR MODERN LIVING

Since its inception in 2021, the Tsavkisi Panorama project has been driven by a commitment to creating a residential environment that combines modern amenities with ecological sensitivity.

"When selecting the location for this project, we placed great importance on its suitability for permanent residence, as opposed to a seasonal summer home," explains Gegi Vasadze, Managing Partner of Tsavkisi Panorama. "The chosen site is conveniently close to the center of Tbilisi, just a short distance from Freedom Square. Additionally, it offers both impressive views of Tbilisi and a picturesque view of the surrounding forest massif."

This strategic location not only offers

breathtaking views, but also provides a sense of tranquility and escape from the urban hustle. The development's close proximity to Tbilisi ensures that residents can enjoy the cultural and commercial benefits of the city while living in a peaceful, green environment.

INNOVATIVE DESIGN AND PLANNING

The Tsavkisi Panorama development spans 13 hectares and is characterized by a thoughtful design and spacious layout.

"We opted against compact land division; we could have divided each section into 600-square-meter plots during the planning process," Vasadze notes. "But we chose to offer larger plots ranging from 1000 to 1,100 square meters to ensure that residents enjoy a sense of openness and tranquility."

This decision reflects a commitment to maintaining a low-density environment that avoids the overcrowding typical of many urban developments.

The design emphasizes a harmonious integration with the natural surroundings, offering a perfect balance between modern infrastructure and ecological preservation. The development includes 1.5 hectares of recreational areas, three sports fields, bicycle paths, and a 1,000-meter-long walking alley, all meticulously planned to enhance the quality of life for residents.

AMENITIES TAILORED TO RESIDENT NEEDS

Tsavkisi Panorama goes beyond conventional residential offerings by providing a range of amenities designed to cater to various interests and lifestyles.

"We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of our community," says Vasadze. "We have accommodated requests from residents, such as constructing a padel field, which was not initially part of our plan. We allocated extra funds and space to fulfill this request."

In addition to the padel field, the development now features a small artificial lake and designated resting areas. These additions were made in response to feedback from the community, demonstrating the project's flexibility and commitment to creating a living environment that evolves with its residents' needs. The integration of such features underscores Tsavkisi Panorama's dedication to providing a comprehensive and fulfilling residential experience.

FOCUS ON SAFETY AND COMMUNITY

Safety and comfort are central to the Tsavkisi Panorama experience. The development is equipped with 24-hour security services to ensure a safe and secure environment for all residents. "All essential infrastructure, including utilities and road paving, has been completed, and all obligations have been met," Vasadze confirms. "We only have a few minor tasks left, such as installing a slide for children. We are waiting for more residents to move in before completing this feature to ensure it meets their needs."

The community is designed with families in mind, featuring children's play areas, including sand pits, slides, and age-appropriate play zones. The emphasis on safety and high standards in common areas ensures that Tsavkisi Panorama is not just a place to live in, but a place where families can thrive and enjoy a high quality of life.

NATURAL BEAUTY AND CONNECTIVITY

The surrounding environment of Tsavkisi Panorama is a major draw, offering res-



idents an unparalleled opportunity to enjoy natural beauty while staying connected to Tbilisi. "The development's location allows residents to enjoy the best of both worlds—proximity to the city center and the tranquility of a green, protected environment," Vasadze highlights. "The nearby Mtatsminda Park and Technopark add to the area's attractiveness, providing additional recreational and cultural options."

The integration of green spaces and recreational facilities enhances the appeal of the development, making it an ideal environment for outdoor activities and relaxation. This thoughtful approach to design and planning ensures that residents can enjoy a balanced lifestyle, with easy access to the urban amenities of Tbilisi and the peaceful retreat of their natural surroundings.

LAST OPPORTUNITY

As the Tsavkisi Panorama project nears its final stages, the opportunity to secure one of the last available slots is rapidly diminishing.

"The project is now complete, and residents are already moving in," Vasadze confirms. "This indicates that we have fulfilled our commitments and that the community is ready to welcome new members."

With only 3 plots remaining out of 98, prospective buyers are encouraged to act swiftly. The remaining plots offer the chance to be part of a premier residential community that combines modern amenities with an eco-friendly, natural

environment. This limited availability makes it a unique opportunity to secure a place in one of the most sought-after developments near Tbilisi.

For those interested in making Tsavkisi Panorama their new home, now is the time to act. The remaining plots are expected to sell quickly due to the development's exceptional combination of location, design, and amenities. Don't miss out on the chance to enjoy a high-quality lifestyle in a serene and well-planned community. Contact the sales team today to learn more and take the next step towards securing your new home in Tsavkisi Panorama.



Belle About Town: Discover Georgia through Food



BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

The famous British magazine Belle About Town has introduced its readers to Georgian dishes and wine by writing about the National Geographic Traveler Food Festival in London.

"The National Geographic Traveler Food Festival was attended by the Georgian ambassador and representatives of the Georgian National Tourism Administration. Leading Georgian chefs and sommeliers joined those from around the world in London for a series of culinary and wine masterclasses.

"There were tastings and discussions about Georgian food, and guests discovered a viticulture that's thrived for some 8,000 years. Under the guidance of sommelier Irakli Cholobargia, they tasted wines crafted at the crossroads of Europe and Asia," Belle About Town's Gill Martin wrote.

Rehabilitation of Tbilisi Darejani Palace Completed

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

The Tbilisi Development Fund has successfully completed the second stage of rehabilitation of a cultural heritage site in Tbilisi,

Darejani Palace.

The project restoration work involved replacing a wooden balcony, restoring a large room, renewing wooden columns and repairing the floor of the outdoor balcony.

The rehabilitation, which began in February and cost GEL 350,000, was funded by the capital's budget.



Walking in the Footsteps of Genius: Exploring Zakaria Paliashvili's Museum

BY IVAN NECHAEV

As the curtains prepare to rise on the Tbilisi Opera House's new season with one of Zakaria Paliashvili's masterpieces 'Abesalom da Eteri,' there's no better time to immerse yourself in the life and legacy of this monumental composer. The Museum of Zakaria Paliashvili, a hidden gem in Tbilisi's cultural landscape, offers a unique opportunity to delve into the world of Georgia's musical giant. For enthusiasts and newcomers alike, a visit to this museum is a journey through time that celebrates the essence of Georgian classical music.

A SYMPHONY IN STONE: THE MUSEUM'S CHARM

Zakaria Paliashvili stands as a towering figure in the history of Georgian music. His contributions to the development of Georgian operatic and classical music are profound and far-reaching. Paliashvili was the first composer to integrate elements of Georgian folk music into classical opera, a move that significantly influenced the evolution of Georgian musical tradition. His works are characterized by vivid melodic lines and intricate orchestration, setting them apart in both Georgian and global musical contexts.

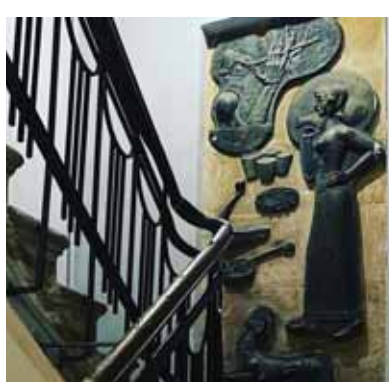
Housed in the former residence of Zakaria Paliashvili, the museum itself is a piece of historical artistry. Its architecture, a testament to early 20th-century Georgian design, reflects the era of Paliashvili's creative peak. The building's classic charm sets the stage for an intimate exploration of the composer's world. Inside, the space is thoughtfully curated to balance historical reverence with modern exhibit practices, creating an immersive experience for visitors.

MANUSCRIPTS AND MELODIES: A TREASURE TROVE OF MUSICAL HISTORY

One of the museum's most captivating features is its extensive collection of original manuscripts and musical scores. Among these, the manuscript of 'Daisi' stands out, offering a window into Paliashvili's genius. This opera, with its rich



Photo by the author



blend of Georgian folk elements and classical sophistication, is a cornerstone of his legacy. For musicologists and enthusiasts, these manuscripts are not mere artifacts, but living documents of a composer's creative journey.

'Abesalom and Eteri' is one of Paliashvili's most renowned works, based on a Georgian epic. Premiering in 1928, this

opera is noted for its complex orchestration and deep emotional impact. Musically, Paliashvili employs traditional Georgian melodies and rhythms, woven into a classical operatic framework. The opera exemplifies a synthesis of folk elements with European operatic traditions, creating a unique style distinguished by its orchestral textures and vocal techniques.

'Daisi' is another significant work by Paliashvili, first performed in 1924. It is considered a pinnacle of his operatic output, marked by a harmonious blend of folk motifs and classical forms. In 'Daisi,' Paliashvili uses expanded harmony and complex polyphony to create a rich emotional palette. The opera explores themes of love, betrayal, and struggle, making it both universally engaging and culturally significant.

PERSONAL ECHOES AND AURAL IMMERSION: A COMPOSER'S INTIMATE WORLD

The museum's collection of personal letters and correspondence provides a fascinating glimpse into Paliashvili's life beyond the stage. These letters, exchanged with notable contemporaries such as Kote Marjanishvili, offer insights into the broader cultural and political landscape of the time. The intimate nature of these documents reveals the human side of a man whose music has touched so many lives.

In addition to visual exhibits, the museum features a dedicated space for auditory exploration. Here, visitors can listen to recordings of Paliashvili's most celebrated works, including 'Abesalom da Eteri.' This audio experience brings

his compositions to life, allowing one to appreciate the subtleties of his musical language and the emotional depth of his operas.

A CULTURAL BEACON: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Museum of Zakaria Paliashvili is more than just a repository of historical artifacts; it is a vibrant educational center. With regular lectures, workshops, and performances, the museum plays a crucial role in fostering a deeper understanding of Georgian music. Its outreach initiatives, including collaborations with schools and international cultural organizations, ensure that Paliashvili's legacy continues to resonate with audiences around the world.

As the new opera season unfolds and Tbilisi embraces Paliashvili's works once more, a visit to the Museum of Zakaria Paliashvili offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with the composer's enduring legacy. Through its expertly curated exhibits and engaging programs, the museum stands as a testament to Georgia's rich musical heritage. For anyone with a passion for music and history, it is a destination that promises both inspiration and insight.



A Symphony of Legacy: 2024 Night Serenades Honors Liana Isakadze's Lasting Impact

TRANSLATED BY KESARIA KATCHARAVA

The death of Liana Isakadze is a significant loss for the world of music. Her contribution to the development of classical music is invaluable, and it is impossible to fully capture her impact as a musician in words. "Conscience is a declaration of human freedom in God"—this phrase of Liana Isakadze was a guiding principle throughout her life. It is a great honor for the creative and organizing team of 'Night Serenades,' and at the same time a responsibility, to be part of this festival and to work selflessly to continue the history that Isakadze began, expressing our gratitude to this great creator. In light of this, we conducted an interview with Nina Tsagareli, the General Director of the Night Serenades festival and the founder of the Art Alliance company, to discuss the legacy of Liana Isakadze and the future direction of the festival.

TELL US ABOUT THIS YEAR'S NIGHT SERENADES PROGRAM? WHAT CRITERIA DID YOU USE TO SELECT THE PARTICIPANTS, AND WHO WILL CLASSICAL MUSIC LOVERS BE ABLE TO LISTEN TO?

This year's Night Serenades marks the 16th edition since its revival. Naturally, the festival's organizing team closely follows global events in classical music, keeping an eye on emerging talents and the latest creative innovations from already established musicians. We always strive to introduce world-class artists to our audience while paying special attention to Georgian musicians. It is important to us that each year the festival brings together the best performers from both the global and Georgian music scenes, presenting the results of their collaboration to the audience. This year's festival is no exception. The audience will enjoy performances by well-known and beloved artists with updated concert

programs, as well as by young, talented musicians who are already recognized worldwide but are still relatively unknown in Georgia.

TELL US MORE ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FESTIVAL

Among this year's participants is the Italian conductor Beatrice Venezi. She is the principal conductor of Orchestra the artistic director of the Taormina Arte Foundation, and the musical advisor to Italy's Minister of Culture, Gennaro Sangiuliano. She gives concerts worldwide and performs both operatic and instrumental music. While a female conductor is no longer surprising in Europe, Georgian audiences don't often have the opportunity to experience performances by female conductors. Our audience was introduced to Beatrice Venezi last year, and she earned great affection from the Georgian public. I believe this love is mutual, as she readily accepted our invitation to participate in this year's festival. I think her concert will be special, as she will conduct Italian symphonic music with the National Symphony Orchestra and Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with our extraordinary pianist, Sandro Nebieridze.

Sandro hardly needs an introduction—everyone in Georgia knows him well. However, since Sandro continued his studies at the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts, we've missed his concerts, so we are thrilled that Sandro will perform Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto at our festival. He has not yet played it in Georgia. The concert by violinist Andres Gabetta and recorder player Maurice Steger will be equally unforgettable. The recorder is an instrument from the Baroque era, considered the ancestor of the modern flute, and is rarely heard in Georgia. Both soloists are recognized as among the best performers of Baroque music, collaborating with leading Baroque orchestras and musicians, such as Cecilia Bartoli. Violinist Alvin Khoja Ganiev and bandoneonist Mario Stefano Pietrodarki will also perform at the festival.

Alvin is a young Azerbaijani violinist,

a laureate of several international competitions, and a recipient of the Pope's Medal. Alvin plays a unique 1715 Giuseppe Guarneri filius Andreae violin. Thus, concertgoers will have the opportunity to not only witness his extraordinary performance but also to hear a violin created by one of the greatest masters over 300 years ago. As for the Italian bandoneonist Mario Stefano Pietrodarki, he is a great friend of the festival. He is one of the best bandoneonists in the world, and his concerts always leave a lasting impression on the audience.

We are confident that our listeners are eagerly anticipating his performances. This year, we will also have two thematic concerts. The "Evening of Brazilian Music" will bring together Brazilian academic music, which is very interesting, diverse, and yet almost unknown to the Georgian public. We will perform works by Brazilian composers from different generations, and we will have exceptional young soloists—Lizi Ramishvili, Mariam Roinishvili, and Giorgi Okashvili. Another evening of the festival will be dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the great Czech composer Bedrich Smetana. Pianist and composer Giorgi Shaverzashvili and violinist Giorgi Khaindrava will perform music by Smetana, Dvorák, and Janáček.

The musicians share a long friendship and creative collaboration, which, as you know, creates a special intimacy and unforgettable atmosphere in concerts. This year, we will again be joined by the "Borjomi" ensemble (conducted by Giorgi Bugianishvili), which adds a special touch to the evenings in Borjomi. Giorgi and Mariam Bugianishvili have prepared a special surprise for the audience—a unique father-son duet. We are delighted that the National Symphony Orchestra, which has been a festival partner since 2023, allows us to perform flexible works for symphony orchestras within our festival.

This year, Beatrice Venezi and Sandro Nebieridze will perform Respighi and Rachmaninoff's music. I must also mention with special affection our resident orchestra, the "Georgian Virtuosos," and



Nina Tsagareli, General Director of Night Serenades and founder of Art Alliance

the orchestra's first violinist, Lela Mchedlidze, who are always distinguished by their high-level performance and provide excellent support to the soloists. I believe that this year's festival will be especially vibrant, leaving an unforgettable impression on our listeners with its musical discoveries and emotional depth.

WHERE AND WHEN WILL THE CONCERTS BE HELD?

This year's Night Serenades will be held in three cities in Georgia: Borjomi, Batumi, and Tbilisi. The festival will officially open on August 21 with a gala concert at the Borjomi Likani Hotel, held in the open air. It will continue in Batumi on August 23 and 25 at the Ili Chavchavadze Professional State Drama Theater, and the Tbilisi concerts will be held on September 18 in the Small Hall of the Tbilisi Conservatory, and on September 15, 17, and 20 in the Grand Hall of the Conservatory.

WHAT WILL BE SPECIAL AND DIFFERENT THIS YEAR?

This year, we have seven concerts, which is both a great responsibility and a great joy. We have a diverse program ranging from Baroque music to hits from the world's cinematic classics, featuring

extraordinary soloists and orchestras. We pour our hearts and souls into these performances, sharing the emotions evoked by the music with our listeners.

LET'S REFLECT ON THE PAST YEARS. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WERE THE KEY PROGRAMS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS, AND COULD YOU DISCUSS NIGHT SERENADES AS A CULTURAL EVENT IN GENERAL?

Night Serenades was founded by the legendary Georgian violinist and conductor Liana Isakadze in 1982, in Abkhazia. It is the oldest festival of its kind in Georgia. Since its inception, the festival has endured many ups and downs, changing its appearance and location numerous times, but it continues to live, grow, and evolve. Over the years, the festival has created its own history, hosting world-class stars such as Alfred Schnittke, Kurt Masur, Gidon Kremer, and many others. It founded the core orchestra, "Georgian Virtuosos," a unique ensemble that unites Georgian musicians who are successfully working abroad. The festival has always supported and promoted Georgian academic music.

At Night Serenades, Georgian music is performed not only by Georgian musicians but also by foreign soloists, and world premieres of works by Georgian composers—specifically created for the festival—are frequently presented. Night Serenades has secured a unique place in Georgia's musical life, and it is a great honor for us to continue the work begun by Liana Isakadze. Therefore, it is crucial for me personally, for the festival's artistic director Giorgi Isakadze, and for every member of the organizing team, to preserve the festival's traditions and identity while continuously renewing and developing it.

WILL THERE BE SECTORAL MASTER CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS DURING THE FESTIVAL THIS YEAR?

Yes, Night Serenades traditionally places special emphasis on educational programs for students and young people, including those with disabilities. These programs include sectoral master classes and workshops in Tbilisi and other regions. Invited foreign soloists and composer Giorgi Shaverzashvili will be involved in the educational section. Exhibitions of Georgian artists will be organized in the Batumi Drama Theatre and the Grand Hall of the Conservatory's lobbies. We believe that holding the festival is particularly important for musicians and listeners alike, as well as for promoting the continuous process of knowledge and experience-sharing among the younger generation. This will contribute to the progress and future development of cultural and artistic processes in our country, and therefore, we will continue to support this aspect of the festival in the future.



Small Space, Grand Vision: Vato Bakradze's 'Goalpost of Nature' at Patara Gallery



Photo by the author

BY IVAN NECHAEV

Patara Gallery is currently showcasing Vato Bakradze's audacious solo exhibition, 'Goalpost of Nature,' which runs from August 3 to August 30, 2024. This exhibition is an evocative exploration of nature and human-made constructs, blending conceptual rigor with striking visual elements. While the gallery is open for viewings inside by appointment, the installation itself can be observed from the outside 24/7.

REDEFINING BOUNDARIES: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Vato Bakradze's 'Goalpost of Nature' draws its conceptual roots from Iakob Gogebashvili's 1868 book, *Door of Nature*. The exhibition's title and thematic exploration hinge on the duality of nature and artificial constructs. In Georgian, the term for "door" and "goalpost" is identical, a linguistic nuance Bakradze leverages to juxtapose the organic and the man-made.

This conceptual duality manifests through a monumental installation resembling a football goalpost, crafted from cardboard sheets. This work not only echoes the gallery's architectural

features — its slanted walls and ceiling — but also creates a visual parallel with the large, angled banners seen in sports stadiums. This design choice underscores the tension and dialogue between the natural and the constructed, inviting viewers to reconsider their relationship with both.

ARCHITECTURAL SYNERGY: EXHIBITION DESIGN AND SPACE INTEGRATION

Patara Gallery is situated in a vivid underground passage near Vake Park, offering a unique and atmospheric setting for art. While visitors need to sched-



ule an appointment with the gallery administrators to view the exhibition from within, the installation is accessible 24/7 from the outside. This allows passersby to experience the exhibition at any time of day or night, blending the gallery's artistic offerings seamlessly into the daily life of the city.

The installation's design reflects a profound engagement with Patara Gallery's spatial characteristics. The inclined surfaces of the cardboard goalpost align with the gallery's slanted architecture, creating a harmonious yet dynamic interplay between the art and its environment. This thoughtful integration highlights Bakradze's acute awareness of spatial dynamics, transforming the gallery into an extension of his artistic vision.

The rough, urban texture of the cardboard surfaces contrasts with the sleek, reflective properties of Bakradze's collages, which are prominently displayed on the inclined planes of the installation. This interplay between textures enhances the visual complexity of the exhibition, drawing viewers into a multi-dimensional experience that reflects both the physical and conceptual layers of the work.

COLLAGE INNOVATIONS: TECHNIQUE AND TEXTURE

Central to 'Goalpost of Nature' are Bakradze's collages, which utilize adhesive tape to create a layered, painterly effect. This technique introduces a modern twist to traditional collage practices, with the reflective quality of the tape paralleling the varnish found on classical paintings. This not only adds a glossy, tactile dimension to the works, but also challenges viewers' perceptions, making the artworks both visually and conceptually dense.

The collages' use of adhesive tape as a primary medium reflects Bakradze's innovative approach to materiality. By integrating tape as a visible element of the composition, the artist creates a dia-

logue between the layers of imagery and the surface texture, resulting in a distinctive and engaging visual experience.

ARTIST PROFILE: VATO BAKRADZE'S ARTISTIC TRAJECTORY

Vato Bakradze, born in 1998, is an emerging talent with a robust academic background. A graduate of the Visual Arts, Architecture, and Design School (VA[AD]S) at Free University, Bakradze furthered his studies at Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (NABA) in Milan and Chelsea College of Arts in London. 'Goalpost of Nature' represents a significant milestone in Bakradze's career, marking his first solo exhibition outside an academic setting.

This exhibition not only showcases Bakradze's technical and conceptual abilities, but also establishes him as a significant figure in the contemporary art scene. His innovative use of materials and spatial awareness position him at the forefront of a new wave of artists exploring the intersections of natural and artificial elements.

CURATORIAL VISION AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Curated by Gvantsa Jishkariani, 'Goalpost of Nature' benefits from a nuanced curatorial approach that emphasizes the thematic and spatial integration of Bakradze's work. Supported by Tbilisi City Hall, the exhibition exemplifies the gallery's commitment to fostering innovative artistic practices and engaging the local community in contemporary art dialogues.

In conclusion, 'Goalpost of Nature' at Patara Gallery is a compelling examination of the interplay between nature and human constructs. Vato Bakradze's bold approach to collage and installation art, combined with the gallery's supportive and dynamic space, makes this exhibition a notable addition to Tbilisi's cultural landscape.



Photo by the author



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