



ჩავჭავაძის
ცენტრი

ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახელობის ევროპული
კვლევებისა და სამოქალაქო განათლების ცენტრი

Chavchavadze Center's 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



2021



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Founder's Foreword

Talking about the obvious has always been considered a bad tone in Georgia. Let us break this tradition and say it openly - 2021 was a bad year. Much worse than just "difficult" or "challenging".

The pandemic of the century has changed the world's agenda. The Georgian government's catastrophic management of Covid-19 and its prioritizing partisan interests over lives of citizens have claimed the lives of up to 15,000 people in Georgia.

Global and regional politics were full of unexpected or same old challenges. Georgia was not prepared to meet either of those challenges, which too has become a tradition as of late.

Persecution of political opponents has become a routine part of Georgian political life, and no one is outraged or surprised by it any longer. The West seems ready to condone this sad reality, as long as the oligarch's troikas which try political opponents are at least formally called "courts".

Meanwhile, inflation is at an all-time high and the exchange rate of the national currency is at an all-time low. People, living in poverty and despair are looking for a way out, however our Mass Media is offering them shows starring non-existent or compromised politicians and villains artificially featured as heroes. Television screens are full of people who represent no one and talk about everything only to avoid noticing and discussing the obvious, at all costs.


Thus, the processes on the domestic front spiraled from tragic into comic. We hardly even noticed when and how comedy became a farce and farce sled into a kitsch. Only third-rate political actors have remained on stage to read the texts designed for the lead actors by the screenplay. During the existence of independent Georgia, political life has never been as devoid of real content and alienated from the people as it is now.

No wonder that nihilism and apathy reign all around. Conformism, emotional escape from lies and absurdity, internal or real emigration have become part of everyday life and gradually drag more and more people in.

What can one non-governmental organization comprise of a few idealists and surrounded by a few dozen loyal friends do in this situation? More so that the philosophy of the Chavchavadze Center is based on direct contacts with people, which has been ever more complicated due to the pandemic.

As it turns out, such an NGO can aim high. As we summed up the year 2021, we found that despite all the difficulties, we have accomplished a lot. Most importantly, we tackle topics which are of long-term benefit for public – goals which resemble a tree, which if cared for with proper care, will yield healthy fruits for many years to come.





Civic memory, intra-party democracy (so that the political agenda in the country is not determined by partisan clans detached from people), “Agora” Discussion and Debate Club, Project Common Sense - Civil Society Vis-à-Vis Politics, “Youth for Justice” – a series of movie screenings and discussions - these are our activities which have kept us busy during 2021 and which we will continue to work on in the coming years, encompassing all of Georgia.

We often say - if at least one person from each of our meetings asks a question that he/she has not been bothered prior to our talk or that he/she has not been able to ask before, that means that day has not been wasted.

I am proud to say that we have had lots of such days during 2021.

While no one can tell what 2022 holds for us, there is no challenge we cannot tackle as a society through hard work, critical thinking, consistency and commitment to values and long-term goals. With this strong inner belief, we present the 2021 report on the activities of the Chavchavadze Center. We wish you to be healthy, victorious and peaceful. In that very order.

Zaza Bibilashvili
Chairman of the Board

Events

Round Table Conference and Discussion Dedicated to the 30-year Anniversary of the 1991 Independence Referendum, April 1

On April 1, the Chavchavadze Center hosted a round table conference and discussion dedicated to the 30-year anniversary of the 1991 Independence Referendum. Tengiz Chachava, Bejan Javakhia and Bimurza Dadashkeliani, former MPs, participants of this historic event, were invited to speak at the conference. The conference was hosted by Zaza Bibilashvili, founder of the Chavchavadze Center.



Round Table Conference Dedicated to the 100-year Anniversary of Occupation, March 17

“Georgia and Russia: What Has Changed?” – a round table conference dedicated to the ending of the 5-week war and 100th anniversary of Soviet occupation was held by the Chavchavadze Center on March 17, at the Museum of Soviet Occupation.

Zaza Bibilashvili, the founder of the Center, opened the Conference with a speech about “Memory and Politics”. Nino Kalandadze, director of the Center and Dr. Thomas Schrapel, the Head of Konrad-Adenauer Foundation South Caucasus, also addressed the audience. Buba Kudava and Beka Kobakhidze, historians, Rusiko Kobakhidze and David Khvadagiani, researchers at the Soviet Past Research Laboratory, Gia Japaridze, a former ambassador of Georgia to Cyprus and Portugal, Niko Tsetskhladze, a renown artist, Giorgi Mshvenieradze, a constitutionalist and civic activist, Arina Tavakarashvili, a lecturer at Saba University and a civic activist in the areas adjacent to the occupation line, as well as journalists, scholars and representatives of international organizations participated in the conference.

Participants discussed topics such as civic memory and politics, the first Georgian constitution adopted days before the occupation, temporary halt to Georgian Westernism resulting from the occupation, expectations of artistic élite and the reality in the aftermath the occupation, life in the Soviet Union, foreign policy challenges of the two republics (1918-1921 and 1991-to date), ongoing occupation, etc.



Conference Dedicated to 13th Anniversary of the Ceasefire ending the Russo-Georgian war, August 12-13



The Chavchavadze Center and the University of Georgia jointly organized a conference in Tbilisi on August 12-13, dedicated to the 13th anniversary of the ceasefire following the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. The conference was attended by IDPs from the Tskhinvali region and the youth living near the occupation zone.

On August 12 the event was opened by Zaza Bibilashvili, the founder of the Center and Constantine Topuria, the rector of the University of Georgia. Arina Tavakarashvili, a professor at Saba University also addressed the audience. The screening of the documentary “Tskhinvali 1920” followed, ensued by a lively discussion, moderated by Zaza Bibilashvili and the Center’s senior fellow Gia Japaradze.

At the end of the first day, a tour of 19th century Tbilisi was organized for the young participants.

On August 13, Professor of Ilia State University, Giorgi Mumladze delivered a lecture on the Role of Citizens in Protecting Freedom and Democracy. After the lecture, a discussion was moderated by Zaza Bibilashvili and the Center’s director Nino Kalandadze.

At the end of the event, the participants visited the Museum of Soviet Occupation and the Golden Fund of the History Museum.



Conference on “2021 Local Elections - Expectations, Results, Reality”, December 1



On December 1, the Ilia Chavchavadze Center for European Studies and Civic Education held a conference on “2021 Local Elections - Expectations, Results, Reality”.

The conference was opened by Zaza Bibilashvili, the founder of the Center. The director of the center Nino Kalandadze and senior fellow Gia Japaridze also addressed the audience. Reports were presented by the Center’s researchers Giga Jokhadze and Giorgi Kharebava, as well as Giorgi Oniani (Transparency International), John DiPirro (International Republican Institute), Corneli Kakachia (Georgian Institute of Politics) and Shamil Shugaev (Friedrich Naumann Foundation).

During the event, representatives of the public, non-governmental sector, mass media and academia assessed the political situation in Georgia after the 2021 local elections and future prospects, both domestically and internationally.



Presentation of Publication - “Liberalism and Georgia”, June 8



“Liberalism and Georgia” is the title of the publication by the Chavchavadze Center presented at the Caucasus University on June 8. The publication is a result of close cooperation between the Chavchavadze Center and academic circles. Authors of publication are Teimuraz Khutsishvili, Nino Kalandadze, Gia Japaridze, Giorgi Jokhadze and Giorgi Kharebava.

The publication covers history of the liberal ideology and its evolution in Georgia. It discusses the origins of liberalism, Ilia Chavchavadze’s liberalism as a foundation for Georgian liberal democracy, the challenges that such liberalism faces in contemporary Georgia and the reasons for its possible misinterpretation.

“Liberalism and Georgia” is the Center’s modest attempt to fill the gap in public knowledge about liberalism. We also wanted to show that classical liberalism, as taught by Ilia Chavchavadze, is neither a system of extremes, nor narrow ‘political correctness’ and clichés imposed by various partisan groups. Rather it is a set of values, which gave rise to the formation and consolidation of democratic institutions in Western democracies, as well as fostered the development of free, wealthy, sovereign nations as the individual creed guaranteeing their success” - says Nino Kalandadze, Director of the Chavchavadze Center in the foreword of the publication.

The event was opened by the Rector of Caucasus University Kakha Shengelia. Guests were greeted by Zaza Bibilashvili, the founder of the Chavchavadze Center and the chief editor of the publication. Teimuraz Khutsishvili and Gia Japaridze, authors of publication, delivered speeches. The presentation was attended by students and representatives of academia and wider public.

The publication has been published with the generous support from the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung South Caucasus. The publication has been translated into English and is available online.

Presentation of the Chavchavadze Center's research on the Causes of Intra-Party Democratic Deficit among Georgian Political Parties, December 17



This publication is the second part of a three-stage study. At the first stage, the Center assessed the degree of intra-party democracy among Georgian political parties and established that there was an acute deficit of intra-party democracy. The second phase of the study focused on an in-depth analysis of the causes such deficit. The third stage, which will soon be presented to the public, focuses on the social and political consequences of the deficit of intra-party democracy.

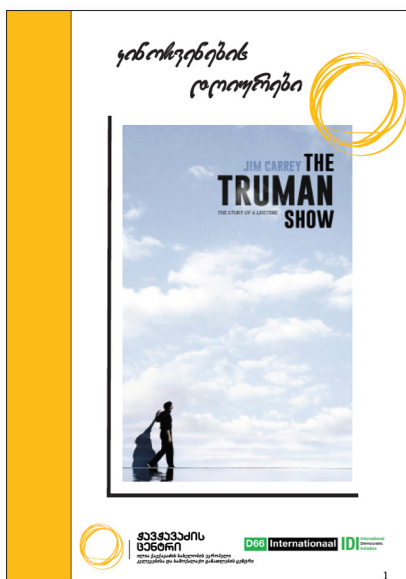
The topics of the presentation and the results of the Center's research are relevant for students and scholars alike, as well as active citizens and wider public. The publication was presented by representatives of the Chavchavadze Center and the authors of the research. Representatives of political parties, civil society, political foundations and academia, as well as interested researchers and students attended the presentation and participated in the discussion that ensued.

The research was conducted by the Chavchavadze Center within the project "Intra-Party Democracy in Georgia". This portion of the project is supported by the South Caucasus Bureau of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the University of Georgia.



Publications

- Intra-party democracy in Georgia
- Liberalism and Georgia
- Diaries of Movie Screenings
- Causes of Intra-Party Democratic Deficit among Georgian Political Parties



Movie Screenings



1. Tsagveri, February 12,
"12 Angry Men",
guest: Giorgi Antadze,
17 participants



2. Dusheti, March 19,
"12 Angry Men",
guest: Rusiko Kobakhidze,
24 participants



3. Center's Office, March 25,
"Freedom Writers",
19 participants



4. Sagarejo, March 26,
“Fahrenheit 451”,
guest: Nika Shakulashvili,
28 participants



5. Telavi, March 28,
“Katyń”,
guest: Ani Khurtsidze,
32 participants



6. Dmanisi, April 10,
“12 Angry Men”,
guest: Davit Bukhrikidze,
12 participants



7. Tsikhisdziri, May 27,
“Tskhinvali 1920”,
guest: Yulon Gagoshidze,
30 participants



8. Ateni Gorge, June 21,
films on Civic Memory,
12 participants



9. "Fabrika", July 24,
"12 Angry Men",
Zaza Bibilashvili, Gia Japaridze,
20 participants



10. "Fabrika", August 12,
"Tskhinvali 1920",
guest: Giorgi Mumladze,
21 participants



11. Center's Office, November 5,
"The Passenger",
guest: Nodar Ladaria,
20 participants



12. Center's Office, November 8,
"The Wrong Man",
guest: Merab Ghaganidze,
10 participants



13. Kutaisi Public School No. 40,
November 11,
"Au Revoir les Enfants",
guest: Davit Natroshvili,
28 participants



14. Gardabani Youth Center,
November 19,
films on Civic Memory,
guests: Zurab Eristavi and Nino
Eremashvili,
15 participants



15. Caucasus University, November 24,
films on Civic Memory,
guest: Bezhan Javakhia,
11 participants



16. University of Georgia,
December 22,
films on Civic Memory,
guest: Beka Kobakhidze,
22 participants



17. Tbilisi Public School No. 31,
December 23,
“Truman Show”,
guest: Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili,
19 participants

18. Tbilisi Public School No. 36,
December 23,
“Truman Show”,
guest: Ana Kordzaia-Samadashvili.
20 participants

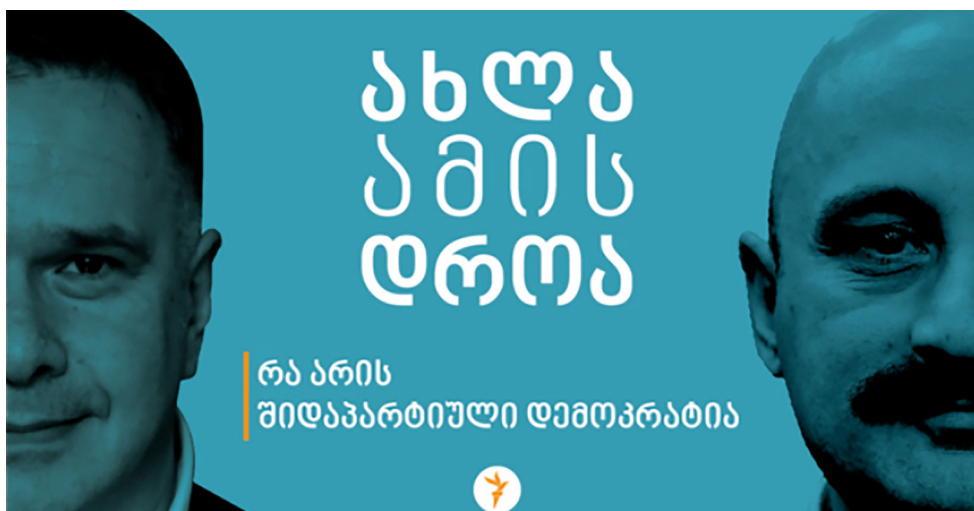


19. Borjomi, December 26,
“Wag the Dog”,
guest: Levan Pesvianidze,
12 participants

All in All:
19 movie screenings
10 of these in the regions
9 in the capital city of Tbilisi
A total of 372 participants

Podcast

Podcast “Now is the time! - Intra-Party Democracy in Georgia” in collaboration with Radio Liberty and ECCMD.



8 Episodes of the Podcast and 8 Articles on Intra-Party Democracy on RFE/RL website:

- What is intra-party democracy
- How the lack of intra-party democracy leads to political crises
- The role of political leaders on intra-party democracy
- Party finance and intra-party democracy
- Why we need democratic parties
- How Intra-Party Democracy works in the EU, German example
- Georgian political parties in the process of democratization
- Intra-party democracy in Georgia - main challenges

Civic Memory

Project Civic Memory Films:



The project aims to educate those who did not witness the first decade of Georgia's independence with their own eyes or whose recollection of those times are vague. 20 documentaries have been produced within the project. Informational meetings and discussions are held with representatives of civil society and young people.

Fourteen Episodes have been Completed. Six are in the process of Completion:

"Darcheli"

"Extra-Judicial Capital Punishments"

"Gocha Esebua"

"Kako Eliava"

"The War of the Two Eduards"

"Resistance Movement" - Episode 1

"Resistance Movement" - Episode 2

"Resistance Movement" - Episode 3

"Javakheti" - Episode 1

"Javakheti" - Episode 2

"Pankisi Front" - Episode 1

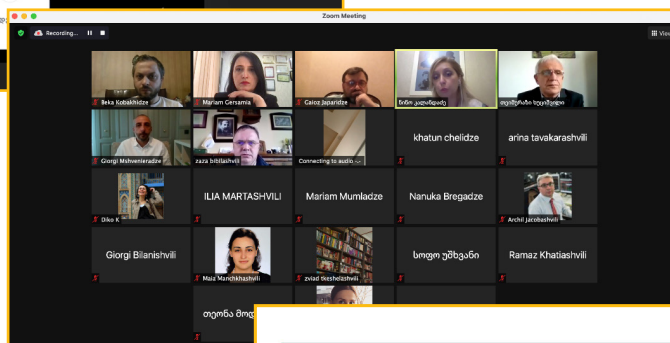
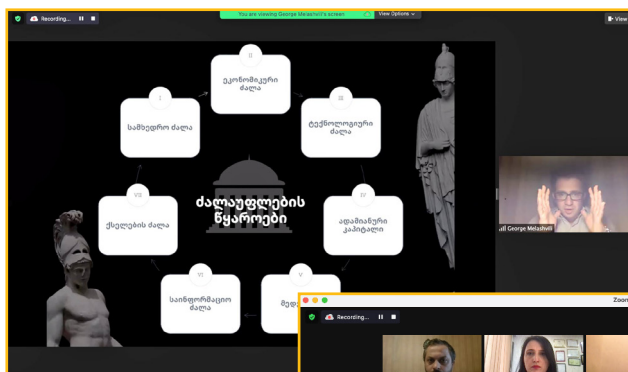
"Pankisi Front" - Episode 2

"Kidnappings for Ransom"

"Ruslan Gilaev"

Online activities

1. Online meeting on “Youth Civic Activism from April 14, 1978, till today.” April 14. Guest: George Melashvili, President of EGI.
2. Online meeting on “Determining a state border between Georgia and Azerbaijan - propaganda, myths and reality.” May 28. Guest - Beka Kobakhidze, historian.
3. Webinar: “Empowering Women Journalists and Media Diversity.” July 9. Guests - media researcher, Associate Professor of Tbilisi State University Maia Toradze and Gender Researcher, Associate Professor of Tbilisi State University Medea Badashvili.
4. “Freedom and Memory” - a public lecture by Zaza Bibilashvili. July 28.



მონობისა და
თავისუფლების
შესახებ



ზაზა ბიბილაშვილი

იურისტი, მწერალი, ილია
ჭავჭავაძის ცენტრის
დამფუძნებელი

28 ივლისი 19:00 საათი

Seminars, Trainings, Focus-groups:

- Discussion with journalists and media managers. May 18.
- Training for Future Journalists (first stream). May 22-23.
- Training for future journalists (second stream). June 5-6.
- Seminar in Ateni Gorge - presentation of Project Civic Memory and screening of films produced within the same project. June 19.
- Conference for journalists on intra-party democracy. June 20.
- Two lectures on freedom and memory at the “Fabrika”, in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. July 25.
- Focus-group and discussion on “Intra-Party Democracy in Georgia”. November 6.
- Participation in an international conference “History, Convictions of Values and their Importance for a Successful State”. October 25-28.
- Public Lecture on Georgian Foreign Policy - Program of Young Leaders of the Center for Strategic Dialogue and the European-Georgian Institute. Gia Japaridze.
- Two lectures for “Students for Liberty”, Gia Japaridze.
- Lecture in the Youth Parliament of Georgia, Gia Japaridze.

Main topics of the year for the Center:

- Civic Memory
- Intra-Party Democracy
- Civic Education for the Youth
- Movie Screenings and Discussions
- Media and Gender

Summary

- 4 publications
- 19 movie screenings, 2 round tables, 2 presentations, 2 conferences, 1 webinar
- 3 online lectures, 14 public lectures, 1 focus-group
- 10 regions, 19 locations
- 8 podcasts with Radio Liberty on intra-party democracy
- 8 articles on intra-party democracy
- 4 video clips on intra-party democracy
- 20 documentaries on civic memory
- More than 1000 participants in total

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