

To all Ukrainians and Georgians who died for the freedom of Ukraine, to all Georgians and Ukrainians who died for Georgia.

To Alexander Petersen, a 29-year-old brilliant American researcher killed by terrorists in the Kabul Cafe bombing while writing my biography.

To my mother, Giuli Alasania, a true heroine, who taught me to be irreconcilable with injustice and evil and never give up even in the most hopeless situations.

**Mikheil Saakashvili**  
Freedom will prevail  
Letter from a political prisoner

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MIKHEIL SAAKASHVILI

# Freedom will prevail

Letter from a political prisoner



# Contents

Building is my greatest passion	9
LESSONS OF GEORGIA EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINE 13	
Introduction	15
Ukraine in my life	19
My family First steps in politics	37
A month spent in Artek	48
The national spirit	52
The Rose Revolution	70
The anthem	86
The flag	87
The Return of Ajara	88
Time for reforms	98
The new life	110
Law and order	127
Summary of Georgian reforms	146
Cities and people	148
The war	176
A small country in a big world	216
The Realized State	253
The French Paris Match called our family “The Caucasian Kennedys”.	
My Jacqueline Kennedy	270
Eduard, Nikusha, Alice, Jasminka	276
The awakening of force: New Ukrainian “wave”	281
FLEETING MOMENTS 321	
APPENDIX 1 345	
Why did I return to Georgia, and why now?	347
The Ukrainian life and thoughts about Georgia	354
The road from Odessa to the Rustavi prison	360
The prison stories	363
Meanwhile, what was happening in politics?	371
The story of my poisoning in prison and transfer to Vivamedi	383

My self-sacrifice for Georgia	386
The Oligarch's Court	390
How the system works	395
New World Order and Georgia	400
Appendix-2	404
How the West failed us	407

## REMEMBERING WORLD FIGURES I WORKED WITH 415

George Soros	417
General David Petraeus	425
Bill and Hillary Clinton	432
Lech Kaczynski	438
Nicolas Sarkozy	444
Angela Merkel	449
Richard Holbrooke	453
John McCain	458
George Bush and Barack Obama	466
Boris Yeltsin and Boris Nemtsov	472
Donald Trump	479
Sebastian Piñeira	487
Condoleezza Rice	491
Charles Aznavour	494
Alexander Lukashenko	496
Volodymyr Zelensky as a modern-day Churchill	502
Kakha Bendukidze	508
Tom Buergenthal	513
Instead of an epilogue	516
Epilogue	531

## HISTORY OF SOME BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS 537

The Bridge of Peace in Tbilisi	539
Ali and Nino	540
The building of the Parliament of Georgia in Kutaisi	541
The House of Justice in Batumi	541
The Alphabet Tower in Batumi	542
The Presidential Palace in Tbilisi	543

The Batumi Boulevard Marriage House	544
Conversion of state buildings into hotels	545
Collaboration with Jürgens Mayer	546
The Main Points of My economic Vision	547
Mikheil Saakashvili's speech at the demonstration on December 21, 2021	559
What I regret:	563
Thoughts for today	565
 ARTICLES DEDICATED TO MIKHEIL SAAKASHVILI 567	
STEPHEN KINZER – Tbilisi Journal; The 'Man of the Year,' Just 29 and Via Manhattan. <i>June 4, 1998, The New York Times</i>	569
GIDEON RACHMAN – Lunch with the FT: Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>April 26, 2008, Financial Times</i>	572
WENDELL STEAVENSON – Marching Through Georgia. <i>7 December, 2008, The New Yorker</i>	579
MAXIM TUCKER – Ukraine's Most Popular Politician. <i>November 4, 2015, Politico</i>	600
MICHAEL MCFAUL – The World can't Allow the Ex-president of Georgia to Die in Detention. <i>January 4, 2023, The Washington Post</i>	605
ANNE APPLEBAUM – The Slow-Motion Murder of Mikheil Saakashvili. <i>February 3, 2023, The Atlantic Column</i>	609
BERNARD-HENRI LEVY – 12.04.2023 Speech by the famous French political scientist, philosopher, journalist and writer Bernard-Henri Levy at the Kaczynski Prize awarding ceremony for Mikheil Saakashvili in Warsaw. <i>12 Avril, 2023</i>	613
INDEX	621



## Building is my greatest passion

### Foreword by the editor of the Georgian edition

When a reader opens this book and starts reading, there is no way back. Without a doubt, he will travel the distance from cover to cover, from the Prologue to the epilogue. Mikheil Saakashvili's *The Awakening of Force* reads like a thrilling adventure novel. It has a gripping plot, but unlike fictional prose, the story unfolding in the book is not a fiction; it's a true and honest reflection of the dramatic events of modern humanity.

The action takes place in two countries simultaneously – Georgia and Ukraine. The similarity, or even more, the identical nature of the political destinies, situations, events and challenges of these two countries, de jure freed from the Soviet Empire and still fighting for de facto independence, is fantastic and, I believe, unprecedented in world history. The lives of Georgia and Ukraine in our tense 21st century are inextricably intertwined. Moreover, this historic symbiosis becomes clearly visible in the work of one outstanding person, who is both the author of this book and its main character. A very original, super-exclusive and unique political profile of this person within today's multifaceted global landscape is well-known throughout the world and especially in his homeland – in the country the restoration of statehood and the creation of modern democratic standards of which he has contributed so much. No wonder, the title of this preface – "building is my greatest passion ." is dedicated to this country.

Mikheil Saakashvili's "Awakening of the Force" stands out among other books of this genre written by famous politicians and statesmen by its sincerity and unapologetic truth. By the form of its narrative it is memoirs, as well as political assay; historical guide to chronology of most important events that changed the world, their objective description and deeply personal evaluation of those events; highly professional analysis of major transformational trends, emerging socio-political and economic concepts. This last element is especially noteworthy – "only the baker must bake the bread!" claims a Georgian proverb. Indeed, no single expert, specialist, theoretician, professor of political science and/or mass media analyst could have managed to assess the current political-social processes in the world more deeply, comprehensively and unmistakably, on the one hand, and portray the central figures participating in these processes, on the other. At the same time, this book is a clear and realistic program of action, which reveals the challenges that humanity is facing in the current period of the post-Soviet era. The ways and means how to overcome these challenges are outlined for Georgia, Ukraine and the democratic world in general, who collectively are facing threats of oligarchy, mafia, insidious "hybrid warfare", KGB, temporarily reanimated by Putin, and undisguised aggression as the last unmistakable signs of the agony of the Russian Empire.

To adequately grasp the concept of the book, it is recommended that the readers familiarize themselves with the brief history of its creation before starting to read it. It consists of three parts. The first part, called "Lessons of Georgia – Experience of Ukraine," was created back in 2016 and was published as a book in Ukrainian and Russian languages in Kharkiv by the publishing house "Folio," based on the literary records of Krasovitski and edited by V. Fedorin. At that time, the author worked in Ukraine and was the Governor of Odessa.

The synopsis of the 2016 edition says: "Mikheil Saakashvili is a unique person who managed to enter the same river twice. He became a thought leader in Georgia, riding the wave of the "Rose Revolution." He led this country for ten years and fundamentally

changed it. Now, he has become a thought leader in Ukraine, which is developing fast. He holds the post of the Governor of Odessa, but he is not only a regional politician. He also shares his experience with Ukrainian politicians, who are reluctant towards radical changes. In the book, he tells us about his family, the circumstances that created the revolutionary situation in Georgia in 2003, and his team's coming to power. He systematically introduces us to the essence of the radical reforms in Georgia, focusing on the successes and analyzing the reasons for the failures.

In each chapter, parallels emerge with the current situation in Ukraine, of which the author has an intricate knowledge from the inside out. In a separate part that is extremely relevant for today's readers, who are worried about the future relations between Ukraine and Russia, aggression in Donbas and occupation of Crimea, the Georgian president tells us about the inner, sometimes hidden dealings of international diplomacy before the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008. In somewhat greater details he describes the process of unfolding of the military conflict. The book contains many before unknown facts of Georgia-Russia relations over the last ten years and discusses Saakashvili's personal relationship with Putin and other politicians. The book also contains, a modern portrait of Ukraine together with the recommendations for the politicians to be considered and swiftly implemented".

However, three years have passed since the Ukrainian edition of this book, and a lot has happened during this time. Consequently, the author added two more parts to the book for the current Georgian edition. The second part, "A Fleeting Moment," describes the events that followed in Ukraine and Georgia, and the third part, "Remembering World Figures I Ked With" with precise, sharp strokes, draws the documentary portraits of George Soros, David Petraeus, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Lech Kaczynski, Nikola Sarkozy, Richard Holbrooke, John McCain, George Bush, Barack Obama, Boris Yeltsin, Boris Nemtsov and Donald Trump, and others, and conveys fresh, objective impressions of them. The most incredible experience that

the author has acquired in dealing with these and other world leaders is generalized.

This time, we present a revised Georgian version of Mikheil Saakashvili's *The Awakening of Force*. This book will undoubtedly be translated and published in many more languages, which will significantly contribute to the awakening of all progressive forces oriented towards a free, bright, democratic, and civilized future in Georgia, Ukraine, and all over the world.

Mikheil Antadze

2019.

# Lessons of Georgia Experience of Ukraine



## Introduction

On October 1, 2012, on the day of the parliamentary elections, I decided to say farewell to the Georgia I created.

I was told that we would definitely win. All polls confirmed this. I looked people in the eyes and read something completely different in them.

Early morning, I voted in Tbilisi and flew to Svaneti by helicopter. Just 7-8 years earlier, this highland area was considered a dead place. People were abducted and killed there, and the significant part of the population had left the area. Not only foreign visitors but even Georgians avoided going there – there were no roads at all.

We built an excellent concrete highway for 200 million dollars and restored most of the roads leading to this historical part of Svaneti. We also built two ski resorts, laid a new power line, restored old towers and temples, and created a unique museum. People returned to their homes, and the area came back to life. The helicopter landed on the airport runway we had built in Mestia. The aeroport is considered one of the most original in the world. I spent forty minutes there.

From Svaneti, I flew to Racha, which used to be desolate and almost empty in the nineties. We built a winery there, and people earned ten times more from grape sales than before. In mid-autumn, Racha was full of foreign tourists; cars were moving around with Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, and Turkish license plates, and conversations in German could be heard. I saw the same everywhere I went.

The next stop was Kutaisi, recently a dying city with an obsolete,

completely stagnated industrial production. Half of the inhabitants had left the city, and the rest were trying to survive on vegetables grown on their small plots in the nearby villages. The helicopter landed in front of the new parliament building, which we moved to Kutaisi. In Kutaisi, public amenities were upgraded in the city center. We also built a new international airport, which in a short time will receive approximately one million passengers per year. All this is very ambitious for a city that had almost disappeared from the map of Georgia.

Next, we flew to Anaklia, where the Russian military base was located until 2007. Four five-star hotels were operating in this once-impoverished village, and six were already under construction.

The works to develop the deep-water port of Lazika were in full swing. Together with the Spanish architects, we laid a boulevard with beautiful lighting, built a railway, and a highway. The only thing that spoiled our mood was the fact that from the second floor of the hotel, one could see Russian armoured vehicles “guarding” the occupation line two kilometres away from the city.

I finished my farewell trip to Batumi, which had become the main project of my presidency. We created a new brand from nothing, the fastest developing region and city in Europe, the face of a new country, the Georgian version of Singapore and Hong Kong. We made a run-down and desolate place into a city with a population of two hundred thousand people, modern infrastructure designed for half a million people, where a new terminal of the “Royal Caribbean” was being built, and a new airport had been opened.



Batumi miracle



Andrea Bocheli, Besame Mucho, Batumi



A Polish song about Batumi

We were walking in the streets. Passers-by smiled and waved at us. My friend Levan Varshalomidze, who headed the cabinet of ministers of Adjara, told me, "They are just hypocrites. They smile at us but vote against us." Varshalomidze turned out to be more insightful than the others. Like me, he had a hunch that we would lose.

An American NDI observer approached me at a cafe near the beach. He told me, "Mr. President, we are observing and watching how the elections are unfolding, but no matter how this day ends, these elections make your achievement even more obvious. You have performed an absolute miracle, and it is completely clear to us."

The day dragged on endlessly. I fell on the bed in the semi-suite of Batumi Sheraton and slept for more than two hours.

We flew to Tbilisi at half past seven. The results of the exit polls were scheduled to be announced at eight o'clock. My companions were trying to avoid looking in my eyes. They were already aware of the preliminary data. The smell of failure was in the air.

In Tbilisi, I conceded the opposition's victory completely calmly and without any delay. I wanted to turn this page of my life as quickly as possible.

Everyone around me was mourning, but I felt calm and firm. I

was even in an elevated mood. An important chapter in my country's history, and my personal life was ending.

It was paramount to continue on the chosen path.



A song about the vine

## Ukraine in my life

For many years, along with Georgia, I identified myself with Ukraine. I came here at seventeen and stayed for seven years. Here, I felt independent for the first time. Here, I developed myself as a person.

Georgia is a country with patriarchal customs: "You are raised by your family". In my case, by my great-grandmother, grandfather, grandmother, and mother. All of them took care of me, and that's why I had a strong desire to leave.

God prevented me from getting a higher education in my hometown: home – university, university – home...

After finishing school, I planned to enter the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. My uncle, Timur Alasania, graduated from this institute and has been a role model for me throughout my life. However, representatives of other nationalities were not tolerated, and there was terrible corruption. Even though I had a gold medal and was well-prepared in all subjects, I was not accepted.

In 1985, I passed the exams at Tbilisi State University, and with the so-called "limit," I was enrolled in the Faculty of International Relations at the Shevchenko University of Kyiv. In Kyiv, for the first time, I felt that I was my own master.

I still remember my first day as a student. In the former First gymnasium, the auditorium located on the ground floor, we were told that, before the revolution, these desks were occupied by the famous Kiyevlians – Paustovsky, Bulgakov, and Bogomolets. During

the break, we went to Shevchenko Park. I found myself in a circle of acquaintances in a small cafe and completely forgot that I was not a native citizen here. Ukrainians, unlike Russians, know how to embrace other nationalities in the way that they forget they are guests.

In my first year, I was almost imprisoned for a long time for anti-Soviet activities. Representatives of third-world countries studied at our faculty, but not only them – we also had citizens of Israel, Switzerland, and France. Of course, there were children of Soviet “bigwigs”. I was not one of them, and therefore, I was vulnerable. The faculty was firmly in the clutches of the security services. They had to keep themselves busy with someone. So, they focused on me even though I wasn’t doing anything special. I indeed loved bitter political jokes and carried foreign magazines with me; that is, I did what I was used to doing in Georgia.

Students believed in Gorbachev’s “perestroika.” The entire student body at the final fifth-year of their study at the Faculty of Philosophy prepared a manifesto demanding changes. At that time, not even a trace of “perestroika” could be found in Kyiv, and everyone was expelled. Those days Dmitry Tobachnik was the secretary of the university’s young communists ligue. . The KGB First directorate worked diligently.

They opened a case against me and started questioning my Ukrainian acquaintances. Not a single Ukrainian betrayed me. My fellow student, Volodya Zhmak, even beat up the investigator who demanded he testify against me. Valodya was a decorated war hero of Afghanistan. Because of this, he could not be sent to prison, although he was blacklisted. It was painful for him because he could not visit his French fiancée, Marianne, in France. An informant of the Security Service from Russia and one Georgian collaborated with the prosecution and gave the necessary statements.

Later, Nalyvaichenko (Head of Ukraine Security Service) gave me an extract from the archive (unfortunately, the case itself, along with the rest of evidence, was destroyed). It says: “Student Saakashvili,