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### **Eduard Schewardnadse**

#### **Als der Eiserne Vorhang zerriss – Begegnungen und Erinnerungen**

### **Eduard Shevardnadze**

#### **When the Iron Curtain was torn down – Encounters and Memories**

The former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union and former President of Georgia portrays his political past and his encounters with leading figures of international politics. Extremely exciting contemporary history with a clear profile. Eduard Shevardnadze, born on 25th January 1928 in Mamati in West Georgia, active as an official in the Georgian SSR in various political bodies, became Minister of the Interior in 1964, in 1972 First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR. Appointed Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in 1985, Eduard Shevardnadze supported perestroika and introduced a new foreign policy. In 1989/90, he played a decisive part in German reunification in cooperation with the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher. In December 1990, Eduard Shevardnadze resigned from the office of Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, becoming Foreign Minister again from 20th November until 21st December 1991, that is, until the dissolution of the USSR. In 1992 he first became Chairman of the State Council in Georgia, then later President up to his resignation in November 2003. Eduard Shevardnadze advocated membership of NATO and the orientation of Georgia towards the West. The German edition is the basis for all translations and editions.

**Presentations** have been held in **Frankfurt, Berlin** and **Tbilissi**:

**Frankfurt Book Fair**, 10.10.2007: Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Eduard Shevardnadze

**German Council on Foreign Relations** – DGAP Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Berlin, 15.10.2007: Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Eduard Shevardnadze

**Goethe-Institute of Georgia**, Tbilissi, 12.03.2008: Eduard Shevardnadze

**Eduard Shevardnadze** "These records were preceded by a long life in politics, mostly successful, but sometimes also unsuccessful, a life of rising and falling, accompanied by disappointments and political resignations. I have here kept a written record of my life, at least that part of it which could arouse the interest of the readers – you can pass judgement over me, unsparingly, without any compromises."

**Hans-Dietrich Genscher** "Anyone wanting to write about the history of those years, the decisive 80s and 90s of the last century will not be able to avoid the book by Eduard Shevardnadze. The reader will learn a lot of new things and see many well-known facts in a new light. Eduard Shevardnadze's book is his political last will and testament."

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Hardcover

Bookjacket

432 pages

66 photos

1 map

ISBN 978-3-936283-10-5

**Translation** from Georgian to German: Nino Sologashvili, Alexander Kartoza.

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The German edition is the basis for all translations and editions.

Revised, re-designed and expanded edition.

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## **Introduction by Hans-Dietrich Genscher**

The name Eduard Shevardnadze is written in capital letters in the history books of the 20th century. Together with Michael Gorbachev, he is one of the outstanding personalities who represent a new way of thinking in the former Soviet Union. They changed not only their country but the whole world – for the better. Eduard Shevardnadze's life story spans all the echelons of the communist party in the Soviet Union. From a position at the top, he was there when this same party was smashed by a revolution from above that opened the way for a better future for the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Eduard Shevardnadze is a Georgian, something he never forgot and the reason why, in the 1990's, he followed the call of his native land and left Moscow to return to Georgia. He knew that he was taking on an almost impossible task, yet he shouldered the responsibility. He knew too that he alone could spare his nation the fate of a bloody civil war. Eduard Shevardnadze is a Georgian patriot.

As Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union from 1985 on, he gradually won the trust of the world, not only for himself but also for the new leadership in Moscow. His open and honest manner made an impression on everyone he met. He has the ability to put himself in the situation of his interlocutors, grasp their problems and seek a common solution.

Like Gorbachev, he also encountered a lot of suspicion. And like Gorbachev, he also became increasingly exposed to criticism and opposition within the Soviet Union. At the party congress in the spring of 1990, he felt like he was running the gauntlet. I am sure the memory of it still gives him some pain.

In his book "When the Iron Curtain was torn down" Eduard Shevardnadze involves us in his arduous journey – in Moscow as in Georgia. It becomes blatantly clear what obstacles the new leadership in Moscow had to confront in its own country. We come to realise how much courage, strength and insight was required of the new leaders. Many hasty judgements will need to be revised – this is my hope at least. As we read this book, we experience once again the struggles for power within the Kremlin.

We experience Shevardnadze as he gains an impression of the key figures of the time in the Western world. We feel his pleasure when he succeeds and also his disappointments. But we also gain an impression of the lucidity and tenacity with which someone who had grown up in the Soviet Union and is firmly anchored within the party reaches out for new horizons. He is not seeking more power, but more humanity and more justice.

“Encounters and Memories” is the subtitle of his book, but it has become much more. Anyone writing an account of those years, the decisive eighties and nineties of the past century, cannot ignore Eduard Shevardnadze’s book. The reader learns much that is new and sees much of the familiar in a new light. Eduard Shevardnadze’s book is his political testament. In the epilogue he writes “I want my readers to know what happened then and how it happened”. “Without a historical memory, there is no present and no future.” “Loving humanity” he writes, “always begins with the love of one specific person.”

As I read that I saw in my mind’s eye Article 1 of our Constitution: “Human dignity shall be inviolable.” But I also saw again that day in 1990 in Brest, as we stood in the cemetery at the memorial for the Soviet soldiers who had fallen and read together the name of his brother who lost his life there on the second day of Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union.

Eduard Shevardnadze found the strength to embark on his arduous journey in his family – that was true of him then and will remain so in future, just as Eduard Shevardnadze will always be for me a friend on whom I can rely.

Bonn, August 2007

## **Preface**

“Encounters and Memories” was written in the period following my resignation as President of Georgia (November 2003). This account is preceded by a long political career, often successful, sometimes not, a life defined by rise and fall, attended by disappointments and political setbacks. I should like to share my thoughts with all my contemporaries in order to recall what happened in the past and how it happened. I should like to give an overview of our relations with our neighbours, with Russia in particular, and I should like to describe the contribution that I made as a Georgian to the development of geopolitical processes in the past quarter of a century. They radically transformed the world: the new “moral foreign policy”, the end of the Cold War, the withdrawal of Soviet armies from Afghanistan, the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the independence of Central and Eastern European states, the building of an independent and democratic Georgia.

I shall write about the world’s problems, of the countries and people I have met and with whom fate brought me together. Even when I was young and knew several writers, I noticed one characteristic tendency they had: in their works they transformed not only the world, but also themselves, showing themselves in a different light. The same thing happens with the authors of memoirs. Intentionally or unintentionally, the author portrays himself as more positive than he actually is. This book was written with the firm intention not to give way to this inclination. I wanted to be objective, about the time I had experienced and also about myself. I have written here about my life or at least that part of it that could be of interest to my readers: it is up to you to pass judgement, rigorously and without compromise.

My “Encounters and Memories” are based on material that I and my colleagues Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaldze and Sergei Tarassenko have put together. Many of the documents come from the archives of the Soviet Foreign Ministry and were made available to me by the former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. My thanks go to him. I should like to thank especially Koba Imedashvili, who supported me through difficult times. It was his support that made it possible for me to put together the various documents, my handwritten notes and the audio documentation. I am very grateful to Zizo Czichladse and Marina Davitashvili, who have looked after my archives for many years.

My warm thanks go to my publisher Peter W. Metzler for his guidance with this book, to the historian Prof. Dr. Peter Alter, the translator Nino Sologashvili for her editorial support and the translator Prof. Dr. Alexander Kartoziya. Finally I should like to thank my family and especially my deceased wife Nanuli, who is still with me now, in every word and in every line of this book.

Tbilisi, July 2007, Eduard Shevadnardze

Dedication: In memory of my wife Nanuli Tsagareichvili-Shevardnadze

### **Excerpt from: The final Resignation: November 2003**

“Where are you going now, Mr President?” “I’m going home ...” For a very long period, from 1972 to 2003, I was political leader in Georgia, with the exception of the seven years I spent as Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in Moscow. In the course of these years, I often had cause to review my political beliefs. Because of this, the reservations about me as a politician grew. At the same time I always tried – and largely succeeded – to find a common language with our people. Unfortunately I cannot claim this for my last period in government in which I noticed alienation developing between me and a part of Georgian society. Differences with those politicians who had established themselves in government with my support not only became evident but intensified.

When I returned home in 1992, Georgia was politically isolated. At that time the Ukraine alone recognised the country’s independence. The nation had descended into chaos, the economy had hit rock bottom. A civil war was raging between the so-called “brotherhoods”. There was looting and despotism. I was more or less successful in leading Georgia out of this difficult situation.

But a lot of time has passed since then and these events are of less interest now for the people of my country. This is not surprising, as the mind has a tendency to forget. Over the years contradictory opinions about me developed in Georgian society. A not inconsiderable section of the population observed the changes in my political beliefs with suspicion and no longer really trusted me. I too obviously no longer understood the people, especially the younger generation for whom my services to Georgia and the world basically meant nothing.

The events of November 2003 were preceded by wellplanned actions on the part of the opposition. At the same time the machinery of government in Georgia proved to be too weak. There were also several high-ranking government officials whom I trusted who were ready to negotiate with the opposition in order to stay in power. Ultimately a “Yugoslavian scenario” began to unfold, albeit with specific Georgian elements and managed and inspired regionally.

I don’t think, however, that events were directed at my resignation from the office of head of government, not at the outset at least. They were more like a struggle for the positions in power in the post-Shevardnadze era, for I had only sixteen months left as President. The opposition’s preparations were thorough. There are also some Russian and American organisations that should not be overlooked who played a very active role in these processes. Many reactionaries in Russia welcomed my political downfall, for them Eduard Shevardnadze belonged to that “infamous” group who had destroyed the Soviet Union and was part of all the “disasters” that had befallen the “superpower”...

## PRESS

**Éduard A. Ševardnadze** Kogda ruchnul železnyj zanaves. Vstreči i vospominanija.

Die Erinnerungen wurden in georgischer Sprache verfasst.

Die deutsche Ausgabe „Als der Eisene Vorhang zerriss (2007)“ ist Grundlage für alle Übersetzungen und Ausgaben außerhalb der georgischen Sprache. Ein Teil des Inhalts der georgischen Ausgabe „Pikri Tsarsulsa da Momawalze – Memuarebi (2006)“ wurde schon vor 2007 in deutscher Sprache sowie in anderen Sprachen publiziert. Diese bereits veröffentlichten Inhalte wurden nicht in die aktualisierte, neu konzipierte und durch neue Inhalte ergänzte Ausgabe übernommen. Somit ist die deutsche Ausgabe maßgeblich und Grundlage für weitere Forschungen, nicht die russische Ausgabe. **www recensio net** 08.02.2013

**Review** Édouard A. Ševardnadze: Kogda ruchnul železnyj zanaves. Vstreči i vospominanija, Moskva: Evropa, 2009, in: **Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas** / jgo.e-reviews, JGO 60 (2012), H. 3, S. 444-445, Review from Gerhard Wettig.

**Eduard Shevardnadze** I knew the USSR would collapse.

**METRO**, [www metro us](http://www.metro.us) 06.10.2010

**Édouard Chevardnadze** Je savais que l'Union soviétique s'effondrerait.

**Metro World News**, [www journalmetro com](http://www.journalmetro.com) 28.09.2010

### Russia

Когда рухнул железный занавес. Встречи и воспоминания.

Эдуард Шеварднадзе, экс-президент Грузии,

бывший министр Иностранных дел ССР. Предисловие Александра

Бессмертных. Издательство Европа, 428 с.

ISBN: 9785973901882

Eduard Schewardnadse: Als der Eisene Vorhang zerriss – Begegnungen und Erinnerungen.

**Copyright Peter W. Metzler Verlag.** Europe Publishing House, Moscow, November 2009.

### Estonia

Kui raudne eesriie rebenes. Eduard Ševardnadze.

Endine Nõukogude Liidu välisminister ja Gruusia kunagine president Eduard Ševardnadze

kirjeldab oma kõitvates isiklikku elu ja lähiajalugu käsitlevates ülestähendustes oma poliitilist minevikku ja kohtumisi rahvusvahelise poliitika suurkujudega.

ISBN: 9789985666067

Eduard Schewardnadse: Als der Eisene Vorhang zerriss – Begegnungen und Erinnerungen.

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## **PRESS**

Currently in demand: Books about the Caucasus. The events in Georgia – a country on which scant information is available – have propelled a book entitled “When the Iron Curtain was torn down – Encounters and Memories“ to the centre of attention. Today headlines in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung have taken up the topic and the Süddeutsche Zeitung devotes an editorial in its feature pages to it. In this book, Shevardnadze more or less prophesies the conflict. His memoirs are currently very topical, the former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union and former President of Georgia explains the background to Russia’s undeclared war against Georgia. In his book Shevardnadze looks into the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He describes the civil wars in the southern Caucasus, the war over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the bombing of Sokhumi, the expulsion of Georgians from Sokhumi, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russian policies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He describes in detail, for instance, how he escaped an assassination attempt in Abkhazia in 1992: the Russian military carried out an attack on Shevardnadze’s life. Anyone wanting to know more about the background to these conflicts should consult this book as a primary source. Metzler notes with pleasure that the distinguished and in professional circles highly respected periodical S+F Sicherheit und Frieden – Security and Peace published by the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg has reviewed the book positively.

**BuchMarkt 14.08.2008**

(Peter W. Metzler Verlag) Has succeeded with the aid of the outstanding Georgian translators and political editors Nino Sologashvili, Alexander Kartoziya (former Georgian Education Minister) and Peter Alter to publish an accomplished and very appealing book. It is due not least to their extensive academic research work that this revised and expanded edition contrasts so positively to the original version “Pikri Tsarsulsa da Momowalze – Memuarebi” that appeared 2006 in Tbilisi. Footnotes have been added to the book and the addition of an index of persons is very welcome. It is particularly apt that Shevardnadze’s close friend of many years, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, has written an introduction to the book. The recorded recollections of Shevardnadze, now available in German, thus provide an opportunity to examine his political influence and thinking more intensively. Since this is not so much a detailed autobiography as a portrayal of some key, decisive episodes in his political career plus various more or less illuminating episodes, the German subtitle “Encounters and Memories” is a good choice. All in all, the German version can be described as a very accomplished book for initiated readers made very appealing by the inclusion of photographs. Revised, re-designed and expanded edition.

**S+F Sicherheit und Frieden – Security and Peace 3/2008**

## **PRESS**

Buch der Woche. Book of the Week. **Ute Körner Literary Agent – 31.07.2008**

The book, which is worth reading, provides interesting insights into the backgrounds to political decisions. **Frankfurter Rundschau 29.05.2008**

Eduard Shevardnadze was doubtless among the most important politicians. An important historical testimony. **Westdeutsche Zeitung 07.02.2008**

Tactician with a heart: the 'white fox' from Georgia. **Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung 25.01.2008**

For the Germans, Eduard Shevardnadze remains unforgettable as one of those who paved the way for reunification. **Deutsche Presse-Agentur – German Press Agency DPA 23.01.2008**

Here the memoirs most worthy of being read can be found. **Der Standard 22.01.2008**

An important historical testimony. **ekz-Informationdienst – Januar 2008**

They show the way that one of the most important players of the reunification process saw things and provide interesting pieces of the mosaic. A supplement to the well-known relationships worth reading. **Die Welt 15.12.2007**

The memoirs of the former Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union and later President of Georgia rank among the best autobiographic literature that has appeared so far.  
**Rheinischer Merkur 06.12.2007**

With his exciting book ... observes his own Georgian role self-critically.  
**Hessischer Rundfunk (Hessian Radio) 04.12.2007**

Gorbachev said that he needed a politician as his Foreign Minister whom he could trust ... realised at that time that a united Germany was better than two divided Germanies.  
**Südwestrundfunk (South-West German Radio) 28.10.2007**

Decision-maker at the fair. **Börsenblatt 42/2007**

Worldly wise. **Deutsche Welle 20.10.2007**

Warm-hearted meeting. Report from Berlin. **Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger 240/2007**

Book presentation. **PHOENIX TV – vor Ort – PHOENIX TV – on the spot Berlin 17.10.2007**

## **PRESS**

About the fate of the division of Germany.

**Mitteldeutsche Zeitung 16.10.2007**

In his memoirs, Shevardnadze, 79, declared terrorism to be the main challenge of the 21st century but urged the use of soft power to confront it.

**Reuters 14.10.2007**

He was one of the heroes of perestroika and decisively involved in the peaceful end to the Communist regime in eastern Europe.

**Österreichischer Rundfunk (Austrian Radio) 13.10.2007**

The native Georgian from the Caucasus reports in his 'political last will and testament' excitingly from the backrooms of the negotiations.

**Wetzlarer Neue Zeitung / Lahn-Dill Newspaper Group 11.10.2007**

How the Cold War disappeared.

**NRC Handelsblad 11.10.2007**

And his place in the history books is guaranteed.

**Deutschlandfunk 10.10.2007**

Moscow's scapegoat. He provides heaps of surprising details from the final phase of Soviet foreign policy.

**Der Spiegel 40/2007**

Exciting historical testimony.

**Gong TV-magazine 40/2007**

How reunification really started.

**Cicero – Magazin für politische Kultur 10/2007**