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Language

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Georgia inherited a legacy of widespread corruption from the Soviet era and immediately after independence suffered two bitter ethnic conflicts: in 1990 the Ossetian region tried to break away and in 1993 Abkhazian separatists claimed the strategically vital area on the Black Sea. The first elected president of independent Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was overthrown by the military in 1992 and Gorbachev's former Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze took over. He won an election in October 1992, but faced continuing civil war with supporters of Gamsakhurdia based in western Georgia.

Georgia had strong economic and political links to Russia, but the USA took an increasing interest in the region after 2001, both because of desire to extend its strategic reach and because of planned gas and oil pipelines to run from Baku through Georgia and Turkey.

When parliamentary elections were held in November 2003 opposition parties and foreign observers claimed that they were rigged. Thousands blocked the streets of the capital and then occupied the parliament building. After intensive negotiations, Shevardnadze resigned as president, and Mikhail Saakashvili, the main leader of the protests, won a landslide victory in the presidential elections of January 2004. The protesters had learned from Serbia – the activist youth group Kmara ('Enough!') had been in contact with their counterparts in Otpor – and the demonstrators stressed nonviolence and held red roses (hence the 'Rose Revolution').

Because the Georgian opposition received considerable funding and support directly and indirectly from the US Administration, and Saakashvili himself leaned strongly towards the west, the Rose Revolution is often seen as a victory for western states. Detailed studies suggest, however, a more nuanced analysis of events in November 2003. Saakashvili's policies since he achieved power have failed to meet western official standards of civil liberties and the rule of law and have created foreign policy crises (as over his attempt to re-establish control by force over the breakaway province of Ossetia in 2008).

Anable, David, [The Role of Georgia's Media – and Western Aid – in Georgia's Rose Revolution](#) [1], The Harvard Journal of Press/Politics, Vol. 11, issue 3, 2006, pp. 7-43

Also available online as Joan Shorenstein Center Working Paper no. 3, 2006.

Boers, Laurence, ["After the Revolution": Civil society and the challenges of consolidating democracy in Georgia](#) [2], Central Asian Survey, Vol. 24, issue 3, 2005, pp. 335-350

Analysis of the 'revolution' including some mention of role of nonviolence.

Collin, Matthew, [This is Serbia Calling: Rock 'n' Roll Radio and Belgrade's Underground Resistance](#) [3], 2nd edition, London, Five Star, 2004

Updated story of Radio B92 to 2004.

Coppierters, Bruno ; Levgold, Robert, [Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution](#) [4], Cambridge MA, MIT, 2005, pp. 406

Fairbanks, Charles H., [Georgia's Rose Revolution](#) [5], Journal of Democracy, Vol. 15, issue April, 2004, pp. 110-134



Explains background to the demonstrations, and elaborates on role of the US government in relation to the elections, and of the George Soros Open Society Foundation in funding opposition and promoting nonviolent protest. Comments also on the role of TV stations owned by private entrepreneurs.

Hash-Gonzales, Kelli, [Popular Mobilization and Empowerment in Georgia's Rose Revolution](#) [6], Lanham MA, Lexington, 2012, pp. 180

Jawad, Pamela, [Democratic Consolidation in Georgia after the "Rose Revolution"?](#) [7], PRIF Reports No. 73, Frankfurt Main, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2005, pp. 48

Jones, Stephen, [The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?](#) [8], Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 9, issue 1, 2006, pp. 33-48

Argues that the role of civil society bodies was important, but not vital. He suggests that key factors were popular attitudes to the ideal of Europe, the impact of the global economy, the appeal of western models and the implications of the soviet legacy. See also Jones, Stephen, [Georgia's 'Rose Revolution' of 2003: Enforcing Peaceful Change](#) [9] In Roberts; Garton Ash, [Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present](#) [10] (A. 1.b. [Strategic Theory, Dynamics, Methods and Movements](#) [11]) New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 317-334 .

Kandelaki, Giorgi, [Georgia's Rose Revolution: A Participant's Perspective](#) [12], Special Report no. 167, Washington DC, US Institute of Peace, 2006, pp. 12

Account by student leader and founder of Kmara. Discusses background of Shevardnadze regime, comments on why protesters and the government avoided violence, assesses role of internal media (especially Rustavi-2) and argues that the role of foreign support was limited by lack of information and by caution. Summary and full report available online.

Karumidze, Zurab ; Wertsch, James V., [Enough! The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia](#) [13], New York, Nova Science Publishers, 2005, pp. 143

Features interviews with a number of Georgian political figures. Most of the contents are reproduced from the Spring 2004 issue of Caucasus Context.

Lansky, Miriam ; Areshidze, Giorgi, [Georgia's Year of Turmoil](#) [14], Journal of Democracy, Vol. 19, issue 4, 2008, pp. 154-168

Argues there was domestic crisis in Georgia before the war with Russia. Flawed elections, a 'superpresidency' and arbitrariness towards the constitution marked politics after the Rose Revolution.

Welt, Cory, [Regime Vulnerability and Popular Mobilization in Georgia's Rose Revolution](#) [15], Working Paper No 67, September, Stanford CA, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (Stanford University), 2006, pp. 60

Discusses US involvement and assesses the 'Serbian factor' in diffusing strategic ideas. See also: Welt, Cory, [Georgia's Rose Revolution: From Regime Weakness to Regime collapse](#) [16] In Bunce; McFaul; Stoner-Weiss, [Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World](#) [17] (D. II.1. [Comparative Assessments](#) [18]) New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 155-188 .

Wheatley, Jonathan, [Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution](#) [19], London, Ashgate, 2005, pp. 252



Mostly on the period 1989-2002 and the nature of the Shevardnadze regime, but chapter 6 covers 'pressure from below' and chapter 7 the 'Rose Revolution'.

See also:

Valerie J. Bunce; Sharon L. Wolchik, [Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Post-Communist Countries](#) [20], (D. II.1. Comparative Assessments [21]), pp. 148-66.

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