



## Gurdjieff Institute Tbilisi

Celebrating 100 years anniversary

Tbilisi 10-13 October, 2019

## **The Gurdjieff Institute in Tbilisi**

In December 27, 2017, during the EC meeting of UNESCO ITI Georgian Center, the Gurdjieff Institute in Tbilisi (GIT) was set up with the aim to revive interest in Gurdjieff's activities in Tbilisi and Georgia.

### **Background:**

*Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man* was set up in Tbilisi 100 years ago in 2019 - similar to the one in Essentuki, but adapted to the conditions of life in Tbilisi. Although at that time Tbilisi enjoyed a high level of culture, it was not easy for the Georgian Republic (1917-1921) and Tbilisi City Hall to recognize the importance of opening such an Institute; still, in 1919 it was not only opened but at the end, also given a venue. The Institute organized public lectures, Movements classes, concerts and, also here Gurdjieff worked intensely on his ballet "The Struggle of the Magicians". Although the first episodes and some of the dances were rehearsed, and some of the music was written, and the contract for the staging was signed with Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the "ballet" was never presented to the public. And unfortunately, because of the imminent occupation of Georgia by the Red Army of Russia, the Institute was closed in June 1920. Gurdjieff and his followers left the country via Batumi and moved to Europe. After Tbilisi and another Gurdjieff's attempt to open the Institute in Constantinople, it was finally established at Fontainebleau (France) in 1922.

Gurdjieff's ideas had a great impact on 20th century Arts' and culture world in general. While in Tbilisi, Gurdjieff was intellectuals to the intelligentsia and had contact with a number of artists. Most of the ideas relating to the performing arts were inspired by Gurdjieff's work on his "ballet".

His teaching has many followers and groups involved in this work have been established on many continents.

### **The Vision:**

At the heart of Gurdjieff's teaching is the idea that mankind is born with great potential for development, but in the state of "sleep" and his ordinary state of consciousness, does not have the capacity neither to understand nor to fulfill it.

The vision of the Institute is to study and develop the understanding of his ideas and Teachings through his trilogy of his writings, music and Sacred Dance. On the one hand, we can look at how these ideas echo in the context of Georgia's unique historical and cultural traditions in the performing arts and arts' in general to make them better known to the outside world. And on the other, through interdisciplinary approaches, academic and artistic research, spiritual and nontraditional studies also introduce Gurdjieff and the work of his followers to a larger audience in Georgia and elsewhere.

## **The Mission:**

Of course our mission is not to replicate his institute as nobody can replace the spiritual and artistic width and breadth of his stature and nobody can accomplish this feat.....but what we can do is make it our mission to introduce Gurdjieff's work and make it known through conducting activities such as:

- Organize research-oriented projects;
- Organize new publications and translations;
- Organized studies and spiritual practices
- Set up archive and library
- Organize conferences, seminars, workshops; cultural tours, video productions dedicated to the Gurdjieff's in Caucasus, neighborhood and worldwide.
- To award and recognize remarkable personalities in spiritual and cultural practices and studies

To enable us to achieve our vision and mission the GIT has set up the following:

### **International Advisory Board:**

**Tobias Biancone** /GD UNESCO ITI/, **Fabio Tolledi** /Chair ITI Europe Theatre Council/, **David Sakvarelidze**/President ITI Georgian Center/, **Jaroslav Fret**/Director of Godowsky Institute/, **Dr. Levan Khetaguri**/Director and Professor of Arts Research Institute Georgia/, **Dr. Connie Jones**/Profesor, School of Consciousness and Transformation California Institute of Integral Studies, USA/, **Margit Martinu**/International Study Group and Movements Teacher, Italy.

### **Brief information about Gurdjieff:**

Date of birth: 28 November, 1872(?)

Date of death: 29 October, 1949

Category: Master, philosopher, mystic

## **Biography**

Place of birth: Alexandropol (now Gyumri, Armenia)

He spent his childhood in Alexandropol, Kars and Tbilisi. He studied the Georgian language. Quite young left for Asian and African countries and spent a long time in Tibet.

In 1913 in Moscow and St. Petersburg he gathered a large group of followers. And in different years worked in Essentuki, Istanbul and Paris. In 2019 he opened "Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man" in Tbilisi. From 1922 till his death he lived and worked, initially, near Paris, Fontainebleau and then since 1933 in Paris.

According to his teachings man is born imperfect; he is "asleep" and his waking consciousness is driven by his instincts and predominate his behavior. To awaken from this condition, he needs to discover who he really is by observing his unconscious behavior and work to let the real consciousness emerge from his unconsciousness. Gurdjieff calls this process human evolution and sets as the way the exploration of the possibility of gaining his soul. He believes that a person is a self-developing system, and that the perfecting is possible and necessary.

In the first chapter *The Arousing of Thought* of his first series of writings "Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson", Gurdjieff concludes:

*"After this and many similar life experiences, I must, in any case as regards my own signature, be very, very careful. Very well, then. He who in childhood was called "Tatak"; in early youth, "Darky"; later, the "Black Greek"; in middle age, the "Tiger of Turkestan"; and now, not just anybody, but the genuine "Monsieur" or "Mister" Gurdjieff, or the "nephew of Prince Mukhransky," or finally, simply a "teacher of dancing."*