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Armando F Sanchez Production

The Cold War: Living Under Its Shadow

Guest: David Dephy

Interviewer: Armando F Sanchez

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David Dephy

The trilingual Georgian/American award-winning poet, novelist, multimedia artist. The winner of the 2019 Spillwords Press Poetry Award and the finalist of the Adelaide Literary Award Anthology 2019 for the category of Best Poem.

An active participant in the American and international poetry and artistic scenes, such as PEN World Voices, 92Y Poetry Center, Voices of Poetry, Brownstone Poets, Lit Balm, Spectrum Reading Series, Long Island Poetry Listings, New York Public Library, Starr Bar Poetry Series, Poets in Nassau, Poets in Massachusetts, Columbia University – School of the Arts in the City of New York, Great Weather for Media in New York City, New York City Voices, Bowery Poetry Club which named him a Literature Luminary as well as the Statorec Magazine named him the Incomparable Poet.

His works have been published and anthologized in USA, UK and all over the world by the many literary magazines, journals, and publishing houses.

He is an author of fifteen books of poetry, eight novels and three audio albums of poetry. His first book-length works in English, a poetry Eastern Star, have been published in the USA in October 2020 by

*Adelaide Books New York, also his book-length work in English, a novel *A Mystiere*, and a poetry *Lilac Shadow of a Tree* are forthcoming in USA in spring / fall 2021 from Mad Hat Press.*

He lives and works in New York.

Interview:

Armando F Sanchez: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen to my program. I'm Armando F Sanchez. And today we're talking to a wonderful individual that I've come to call my friend. We've never met physically together, but we've communicated. We've shared ideas back and forth. David Dephy is in New York City. But he is from the country of Georgia, which is part of Eastern Europe. And we're going to talk about the Cold War and his interpretation of what happened back then. And also touch a little bit about some of the things that affect that the times affected the people of the time, and this actually carried over into the area of the invasion of Ukraine. Let me give you a little bit of background. First of all, David Dephy is an award-winning poet. He is a trilingual, Georgian American award-winning poet, novelist, multimedia artist, the winner of the 2019 Spillwords Press Poetry Award, and the Finalist of the Adeline Literary Award Anthology 2019 for the category of Best Poem. And I'm very proud to announce that he is recently now received an award for the first-place winner in poetry 2021. Very, very reputable award the Artists Forum in New York City. Congratulations for that wonderful award. David, you merit it, really! I've had the honor of reading your poetry. You've sent me more. And I'm always touched by it so I hope people who are on the show today have access and be able to read more of your information.

Part of the show is we'll give our contact information where people can find you, find your books and get more information with that, David, if

I'm if I read your bio, I'll be here half an hour so I'll just stop there. But anyway, thanks for being on the program.

David, let's begin. The topic is the Cold War. 1945-47 is really when it's officially classified 1947 And you were born in Georgia. Tell us about your experience. How did you and your family experience the Cold War?

David Dephy: Thank you, Armando. Thank you for having me. As we know the Cold War is a state of political hostility between countries characterized by threat, by propaganda, and stuff like this. So this is a state of political hostility existed between 1945 and 1990. To be precisely and between the US-led Western powers and Soviet Bloc countries and Georgia included of course and Ukraine and Baltic countries. So, the story of Cold War for me is a story of total darkness and freedom. The story of death and freedom because we the people have right to be free. Cold War, the term Cold War sounds like deadly sin for me. And let me explain what I feel. In general, what can we feel and remember, when we say this term Cold War? Is this a real war? Are we talking about a real war? A real ugliness of war? The political undercurrent stream of deadly actions and events during the decades for decades. Is this a some kind of fantasy or what is this? And I can say that this is our real history with real people. Real locations story about real locations, real hope, real fight, real silence, real resistance story about bravely. Bravely behaviors of people, behavior of people in Eastern Europe, mostly, of course, but I think anyway, it remains the story of culture because everything in my opinion from my understanding everything is a culture and politics together. Art, for example, art is a huge part of culture. And culture means not only art, but everything religion, science, politics. In this part of the world, I mean, eastern part of the world was under the huge and really deadly pressure of Kremlin during this era, from 1945, mostly from 1945 to 1980. For example, we left it and we manifested our independence in Georgia in 1989. And there was a huge massacre. It's called Tbilisi Georgia Massacre when Russian troops just kill people, even pregnant women in the streets of

capital of Georgia. So Kremlin hates the concept of freedom. Because they never be free they never will be in my understanding because now right now what's going on in Ukraine this is the final war, final battle, final deadly action between light and darkness, between humans and anti-humans because Kremlin is not the statement of empire of madness, but this is untied truth. And by the way, when I read the book, it's called Russian Diaries was by John Steinbeck. And let me read one paragraph written by John Steinbeck when he was in Tbilisi, Georgia. What he said exactly about Georgia, because Georgia is a beautiful country with absolutely strange history and totally unknown for the West. Let me share this with you.

“Whatever we had been in Soviet Union, in Moscow, in Ukraine, in Stalingrad, the magical name of Georgia came up constantly. People who had never been there, and who possibly never could go there, spoke of Georgia with a kind of longing and a great admiration. They spoke of Georgia as Superman, as great drinkers, great dancers, great musicians, great workers, lovers and great poets.”

Sanchez: You slip that one in!

Dephy: “And they spoke of the country in the Caucasus and around the Black Sea as a kind of second heaven. Indeed, we began to believe that most Russians hope that if they live very good and virtuous lives, they will go not to heaven, but to Georgia. And they die, heaven forbid. It is a country favored in climates, very rich in soil, and it has its own little ocean, Black Sea. Great service to the state is rewarded by a trip to Georgia. It is a place of recuperation for people who have been long ill and even during the war. It was a favorite place for the Germans never got there. Neither with planes nor with troops. It is one of the places that was not hot at all.” So this is a statement written by John Steinbeck and Russia crushed Georgia culture just crushed. It crushed churches, crushed education centers, Russia attempt another attempt to conquer Georgian language and replace Georgian language by Russian language. It's a crazy and everything happens in that period of time when Georgia

was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1921. But in 1945, when Stalin was a Georgian and this is the huge shame because I think Stalin was an anti-man not only just a bad guy in history, no, he was a huge, huge he wasn't a normal man at all. He was he was devil in the flesh, like Putin try to be like Stalin but no, no-no. Kremlin must be destroyed. Because Cold War is still going on in our minds. I know then we know the end is near and of the Kremlin but we must remember what has happened before in Europe and in the world itself, of course. And by the way, I'd like to say a little compliment because I up until I happen to up on the walk by you this Cold War Living Under Its Shadow. And I'm deeply honored that I wrote a little short review about your book and you gave us a brilliant answers from eyewitnesses. People who our generation for example, witnessed this Cold War by our own eyes and you gave us a brilliant answers. It always works. Eye witness as a man or woman who was in right place or not in right place in the right time but nothing right time. We don't know exactly but we were there. We know. We still can feel and smell and our five senses are ready to tell the story. So it's not quite good. And fantasy story like Hollywood did or European cinema did. This is a real stuff, story about heroes, unknown heroes. All of them just vanished just disappeared. But the symbol of this epoch I can say absolutely freely and fluently was a words famously said by President of United States Mr. Ronald Reagan, "Tear down this wall Mr. Gorbachev." And I think this is the landmark in the history of this. These words are the many landmarks in the history like words and actions by our first president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who manifest the independence of Georgia and this is also the huge landmark. Words by in actions and other actions by Vaclav Havel, and the Presidents of Poland and Baltic countries. This is a story about new generation of Spartans. So that's the I think that's the right work with distilleries of eyewitnesses, I mean, in your book, and you will find solace in this work and I think so. You already have this answer in the book has already been the answer. What really has happened from 1945 till 1990? I think the point is great stories both were relatable and tangible but not it's far beyond of our understanding what history is because history is a very, very strange stream of our memories. It cannot be false. Of course not. It's precisely,

absolutely, right thing in our culture. But sometimes we all we all are living under, not on the shadow of the Cold War, but under the shadow of history itself. I mean, it's like a labyrinth. It's very strange labyrinth.

Sanchez: Let me, let me say that as we see the Russians attacking the Ukraine, or we go back into the history of the Cold War are we judging the whole country, all its population and saying they're all bad people? Or do we have to be careful and say the leadership and, you know, the people closely around the leadership are the ones that are really pushing a lot of policies that the people are not aware of, whether it be in Russia or back in the Cold War, all the Soviet Bloc countries.

Dephy: This is a pretty deep question and I'd like to see and I'd like to watch and witness a millions in Moscow in the streets of Moscow against Putin. If I see this, I'll be very happy and glad that people Russian people finally realized that something very bad, they did something very bad to the world. Very bad! So nothing, even close. Nothing is happening in Russia right now. But let's stay positive. If we will see millions and millions in the streets of Moscow and San Petersburg and other cities and countries. Other cities in Russia, then we will see and we will say that something maybe will change. But it's hard to say because.

Sanchez: Wow, looking into a crystal ball is always very sad. I totally agree with you but you know, I have to go back to say, you know, Georgia speaks of its independence. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, you know, other countries talk about this is the day we achieved our independence. So if some countries could do that, why can't we say Ukraine will stay independent?

Dephy: Of course Ukraine just showed to the world its golden in transparent spirit full of love and kindness. I called Ukraine "Divine Ukraine" because it's very strange but roots of Muscovites and Katsaps go down, deep down and down in Ukraine culture so I think this is the final and huge war in the beginning of new millennium and new era will

be started and already starting and is going on will be started soon officially. We try to stay human being and remain human being can stay calm and talk about culture and politics but it's not so easy to do. When you see what's going on in Mariopol in Kharkiv in Bucha and nothing is happening in Russia. I mean protests, zero, nothing.

Sanchez: If it did, would the media be able to pick it up outside of Russia?

Dephy: Armando, I don't think so. Well, we all are living in the 21st century. And we have internet. We have so many media, and news companies all around the planet. I think it's a question of choice. I choose to be a citizen of the 21st century. Many Russian citizens think that 21st century belongs to them only and they have the rights to kill people and children. No way!

Sanchez: I've even heard and I've seen it firsthand, visiting a little bit of Russia from the eastern side that people want to go back to Stalinism. They wish they could bring Stalin back. And in some cities, they still have the Stalin statues hoping that he comes back. So the mindset is there. And if we look at the number of people that died, not only outside of Russia but in Russia, through famine, through different areas of death, they are in the millions.

Dephy: Yep. For example, in 2008 Armando when I was in Georgia, Russia made another deadly attempt to conquer Georgia. By its military aggression. I opposed Russia aggression with my protest meetings, I created this slogan and movement Stop Russia. And I was the organizer of this huge civil solidarity headquarter. Many Russians were in Tbilisi in that period of time and I introduced to the people on the stage I said, "Of course we are not against the people at all. But what has happened now?" I turned it's a question of stupidity, question of darkness, question of ugliness, spiritual ugliness, because Kremlin is built by hates region every and all the bad things. Kremlin is a place of death because of the mausoleum of Lenin. It's disgusting. In 21st century, oh, come on, man.

It's absolutely don't understandable. There is no place for evil in 21st century anymore. Something really deadly has happened in the world, by Putin, by Kremlin, by Russia. So time is near. Time is coming. And it will be the huge end of deadly history of empire of madness called Russia.

Sanchez: You know, all the time when I was watching the series of Star Wars. I really always thought of this as still a representation of the Cold War.

Dephy: Correct.

Sanchez: It wasn't you know, it no one ever had flags and said you know, this belongs here and that belongs there. It was the world, but it was the idea of light and darkness. I don't know if he was predicting that. I don't know he if he sort of saw the future. I don't know. But I see it from those forces, that they are a danger to themselves. They ultimately bring destruction wherever they go. They don't leave any culture. They don't leave anything better and the world around you.

Dephy: Armando, You're absolutely right. And I love this conversation. We can talk freely and fluently about this very sensitive, something. I don't know what term to use, but people, culture, politics. The thing is that the world doesn't care anymore about Russia. About dust. I don't care. I never cared but I don't care right now 100% because it's, it is not working and never work that not working. Russia said we are living in hell and you must live with us in our hell. You have no right to be free because we hate freedom. That's the understanding of the madness of Russia. Unfortunately, so maybe fortunately because...

Sanchez: So, you're helping me understand it, but it's foreign in a way to get the concept in our head because we've taken some certain liberties for granted. Freedom being that item. So to the Russian leadership. People being free is a poison?

Dephy: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And this is for generation Armando. Once again, I am not against people, of course, heaven forbid. But I want to see as a normal man, as you as anyone else, I want to see that Russian people care what's going on. But they say exactly opposite. They say in their interviews, I'm watching the news and all of us that Ukraine must be punished. They're fascists, they're Nazis. They're they are killing babies. Everything is fake. So it does this question of stupidity. It's idiotic. Oh, come on! That's the state of political hostility between countries characterized by propaganda and threats. That's the Cold War in their mind. And I think, oh, boy, we can talk about this. Endlessly.

Sanchez: Let me narrow it down a little bit here and specifically addressing the audience in North and South America. We're watching the news. We're looking at this and we think Russia and Ukraine are in a war. This just happened three months ago, little bit more over three months. But the problem is, people see it as an isolated moment, that all of a sudden Russia decided "Oh, we're going to invade" what the don't see is the connection of the behavior into the Cold War era, and how the Cold War era is connected. Probably all the way to Ivan the Terrible.

Dephy: Absolutely agree with you 100%. I agree with you. And we can say that war in Ukraine 2022 Okay. Election see Georgia and 2012 it was Russian special madness to achieve this goal to catch this free country and crush it as possible. War in Georgia in 2008. War in Georgia in 1991, 1992, 1994. Chechnya one war, the Second War, and before this and before and before, of course, the stream of this madness goes deeply down to this Cold War era and before so this is never-ending story. I mean, never-ending story, but it will be ended very soon. Soon means soon. And, of course, the beginning of this conflict dwells in Kremlin, of course but in that period when the world just closed its eyes and say, Russia took Chechnya, it's okay. Russia to Georgia, it's okay. Russia took something, it's okay. But no way. We have consciousness, right? We are not stones. We have minds. We have hearts. We can talk with each other. And we can show to each other the history of Cold War. History of hot, hot war, what's going on right now.

And by the way, Armando, let me congratulate let me say congratulations. Let me congratulate the Kalush Orchestra Ukrainian rock band who won this Eurovision competition just couple of hours ago. Rock 'n' Roll!

Sanchez: Rock 'and' Roll was one of the first bands to go into once the wall of Berlin came down.

Dephy: This is also the Russia always using right now of course many use also anything like a political weapon music rock and roll they used as a political weapon. Many, many rock great bands were just banned in Russia. This is part of culture, they afraid of poets they're shooting the statue of Taras Shevchenko and Ukraine because they hate everything normal, kind and beautiful because they are ugly. Mentally, that's why the world doesn't care anymore about the culture. We're not against the Russian culture. We just don't care. It's easy to understand, right?

Sanchez: Well, I would say an interpreted my own words. They don't care either.

Dephy: That's the conflict between good and evil. It will be ended soon and kindness will prevail. I'm absolutely aware of it.

Sanchez: You know, I'm really unfortunately we're running out of time. But I'm really touched with the idea that the solution is not political. It's human. It's the love, love. The arts, poetry, people who can touch their feelings and say, "We're not going the right way." Right to come back. We have to merge together and we need each other. We can't isolate ourselves, one country to the other. At a different level, I think we have a danger, and we've always had it here in this country and in this continent, that we think of things as "over there". That's their problem over there.

Dephy: We don't have absolutely understandable and, yeah.

Sanchez: That, I think it can be very, very serious problem. Since we're in a global economy.

Dephy: Of course, of course.

Sanchez: The Internet has taught us that we cannot close our eyes. We cannot say it's them over there and it's us over here.

Dephy: Absolutely. It not can be continued this way anymore. We cannot close our eyes to say that culture is we have to separate culture of politics. It's 21st century there's a new politicians, new artists, new Everything is new. We have some this isn't a brand new world. So Russia must be punished and Russia must accept this new world and then maybe something kind and good will happen. We don't know yet. But let's see. And in the end I'd like to make my statement as an idea of what Cold War was, is, and heaven forbid, but will be if we continue this way. May I share with you one of my work, which I wrote on March 21, 2022. It's called *96-Year-Old Man*. May I?

Sanchez: Absolutely.

Dephy: Thank you. This is a story about a real man who was standing on his balcony in the city of Kharkiv and was killed by a Russian missile and he was a Holocaust survivor, survivor so it's a bizarre than tragic story of, I don't know, what the world is this, ha?

I was standing alone in front of the stillness of March, not expecting the flow of memories. We are living without love, that's why the war can't be measured by history, by ashes, by art.

Without today we breathe between yesterday and tomorrow. Do you know something about time?

About time, yes, and its insanity? Do you know something about yourself? About me? How've I lived? How've I loved?

What I did? Maybe you can predict future? Time should have some meaning for you.
For me it's insanity.

I felt history's neurasthenia in that very afternoon when I was standing in front of the stillness of March and not expecting the flow of seconds. Nerves of time.

I understood and I did not expect to be alive, time is meaningless and it's suppressing us.

I didn't expect to feel that deadly second again,

in emptiness, but my heart was able to beat again, my heart is remembering, after centuries,
how to beat again in the frozen silence of fears,

war, in the raw, cold breeze of the laughs and howl.

96-year-old man.

Mr. Romanchenko.

Survived the concentration camps:

Buchenwald,

Peenemünde,

Mittelbau-Dora,

Bergen-Belsen.

Yesterday he was killed

by the Russian missile

hitting his apartment building in Kharkiv.

Russia, the "denazifier,"
did what the Nazis
couldn't do.

Sanchez: Thank you for sharing. I'm trying to put my head together as I was moving. David Dephy, you've put reason to insanity. There were many loose ends I didn't understand about our current history and people are asking everywhere "Why is this happening? Where is it going?" You know, how could this have happened in the modern time? But the reality is we the calendar says 2022 but the mindset might be pre-Cold War.

Dephy: Again, oh boy. So Cold War still echoes but Ukraine will prevail and it means the free world that our civilization will be alive again. I'm absolutely positive. I'm an idealist. I'm a poet. I saw the future. It is divine.

Sanchez: Poets are dangerous people in a great way. My political sense. The call have to poets because you have that power. So I'm aware of that and I always respect that as well. David, we're ready to sign off but before we do, where can our viewers follow you in your fantastic work your poetry, your speaking engagements, etc. Where can people find you?

Dephy: Thank you. So the main event page is called Artistic Freedom Initiative. On YouTube, you can find my channel. It's called David Dephy and Google.

Sanchez: The internet, the internet is open to all of us. David, I want to thank you very much in a moment of great suffering that you have seen firsthand, being from the country of Georgia and being experiencing friends in other countries in the neighboring countries and family I'm sure you have in different places, crossing borders, you still maintain hope. I am empowered by that. And I will remember you by that. And we will have future conversations and I'm going to keep pulling at you. Tell me the future. Not the sure thing what's going to happen but your envisionment being that you grew in that area, you understand the mindset better and that you can put more of the pieces together, which

you have helped me do today. And hopefully our viewers will be able to do the same. Thank you very much for being on the show David.

Dephy: I'm deeply on our thanks a lot. Thank you. God bless you. Go to Ukraine.

Sanchez: I will go. If I'm around even if it's in pieces, I will go. That is something we must see. We must appreciate it more than anything the courage of the people.

Dephy: Absolutely. God bless you.

Sanchez: Thank you, David.

Dephy: Thank you, Armando