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CONFLICTS

AND GENDER

Russia ordinary fascism

ONLY HOOLIGANISM?

Nine years old Khursheda Sultonova was killed in February of 2004, in Boetsovo side street of St. Petersburg. A group of young nationalists, armed with clubs and knives attacked Khursheda, her father and her young cousin, who were returning from the ice rink. The girl received multiple knife wounds, from which she died in her parents' hands.

Two years later, the jury brought out a verdict, which the human rights organizations called a "moral catastrophe". The court accused the 8 men, partaking of the homicide, of "hooligan action". One more indicted pleaded not guilty. The decision of the court shocked the family of the victim and the representatives of the Tajik Embassy in Moscow.

Natella Ponomariova, the defense attorney of the victim, explained this verdict of the court by the fact, that the accused were the offspring of the high ranking Russian officials (according to some data, the law enforcement authorities). This was followed not only by the wave of the protests in Russia, but also a new surge of killings of the women from Kirgizstan, a Senegalese student...

"STOP RACISM" " the public action in Oriol

On 26 March, the activists of the youth rights-defending group "Oriol" and the volunteers of the Institute of the Social Problems "United Europe" staged a rally "stop racism" in the center of the town. Two days prior to the rally, the boys pasting the invitations on the walls, had been attacked and the night before the rally the majority of the anti-fascist leaflets had been scraped from the walls. All the same the action was held. On the whole, the organizers of the rally were satisfied with the results. Albeit, in the opinion of the organizers such an action must not be a "one-shot" measure. Continuous work for promoting the idea of tolerance, especially among the young, is necessary.



photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan



Open protest against xenophobia is not safe

THE FASCISTS ENTERED WITHOUT A FIGHT

last year, 1073 cases of crime against the foreigners were perpetrated in St. Petersburg

A march to the memory of those, who had been killed by the Fascists, held by the democratic movement "Ours", was organized in St. Petersburg on 11 April. More than 5 000 participants marched out to the Neva Prospect, to stigmatize the native fighters for the "racial purity", who maim and murder the foreigners. The contemporary nationalists, in the opinion of the organizers, in no way differ from the Fascists, who tortured the whole nations during the second world war. The last straw, that triggered the mass rally in the Northern capital, was the killing of Lampsar Samba, a Senegalese student. He had been actively cooperating with the Petersburg branch of the "Ours". During the last three months, Samba, together with the commissars of the movement had been conducting the "lessons of freedom" for the pupils of Northern Palmira, promoting the ideas of tolerance and kindness.

In accordance with the statement of "Ours", "the youngsters", who today maim and kill the foreigners, share the same ideology, as those, who 60 years ago had killed millions of our compatriots, not counting them for humans". The activists think, that "60 years after the victory over the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War, the Fascists entered St. Petersburg without fight." By the data of the Internal Affairs Department, 1073 cases of crime against the foreigners were committed in Northern Palmira last year.



photo by Polina Miloradovich, Georgia

an editorial on xenophobia

SPEAK, CRY, PRAY, WRITE AND FIGHT

but do not be non-committal

FROM THE EDITOR:

"CaucAsia" exists online. We are very far away from each other and at the same time - very close; it only takes to push the button send/receive. We correspond often. When the scandal concerning a very mild sentence in the case of little Khursheda was getting inflated, we had been discussing it in our correspondence. Today when I'm re-reading the letters, I understand, that they are important and interesting not only for us. So, now I'm publishing them.

Some days ago, the jury reached a verdict concerning the case of the murder of Khursheda Sultonova, which was linked with the attack on her father, Yunus and her cousin, Akobir, in February 2004, in St. Petersburg. In accordance with the law, the indicted are entitled to demand jury. Albeit, we know, that it does not always get involved in the court proceedings. But in the given case it "got involved". As a result, the first reports concerning the verdict said, that they "pitied the boys".

Then, this issue somehow got diffused; the governor Matvienko toned down (they showed her earlier statement, that "she would take the whole matter under control ") and gradually the whole thing came to a standstill. Naturally, the Prosecutor's office will appeal, something may change a little and then, I'm sure, the whole thing will be forgotten. We have many other things to tend to.

My personal, maybe partially paranoiac opinion (together with many other cases of killings of "non-Russians" and those who are compassionate with them) is, that there exists some policy akin to the ancient "divide and rule", which the national Russian mentality nurtures on, scaring both the non-Russians and our own liberal intelligentsia, which, in its turn, is also non-Russian.

They can not find national or racial hatred motives while investigating the numerous (in my home town - Petersburg) cruel murders of the citizens of "non-Russian countries". The loud denouncements of the press or the politicians yield practically no results and get stuck in the mire. Simultaneously (I haven't checked yet, but I learned about it from the internet) Belgorod street in my town is renamed (at night) into Miloshevich's, the executioner's, street; Gleb Pavlovski makes his manipulative, politico-technological broadcasts, which somehow remind us of the eve of the "Bartholomew's Night". I'm purposefully bending it over too much, to attract attention.

To tell the truth, it's difficult for me to imagine a normal (in my understanding) cross-section of the society - 12 strong jury, who "pitied the young boys", meaning a group of 8 or 10 young males (testimony differs on this account, although I think, that the experienced operatives can easily crack the group of juveniles, who had drunk beer) who stabbed a 9 year old girl to death.

Olga Lipovskaya, St. Petersburg

...two more girls from Kyrgyzstan have been murdered in Moscow. It's clear, that Fascism is purposefully nurtured in Russia. It's also obvious, that done are only those things, which are paid for by those who have power and money. Recently, one of the Russian TV channels showed a lawyer, who maintained, that the skinheads are not really bad guys and that the word itself is a very good word. It's simply that they are sometimes misunderstood "All this is a nightmare, folks, I feel sick from all of this, my heart aches. Something is really weird. It seems, that nobody can stand up to it efficiently. The word efficiently is stressed".

Galina Petriashvili, Tbilisi

IT IS A CONTAGEOUS DISEASE

but it's curable if you treat it seriously

The problem of international hostility has become one of the most socially-relevant problems for the modern Russia. Beatings and murders of foreign students and "Gastarbeiters" from the Central Asia - have passed from the category of the sensations into the category of everyday chronicles, just like the activation of Fascist organizations, who are actively propagating the ideas, denounced in Nurnberg long time ago. First of all, we are talking about the skinheads, the youth gangs, terrorizing those, who do not belong to the title nation of the country { who the nationalists deprecatorily call the aliens}

We are talking about an inner - Russian phenomenon, as well as a contagious disease, which, by the way, can not be fought against even by the leading democratic states, where the youth from the social outsiders replenishes the ranks of the "outcasts" and aggressive groupings. In this respect, the problems, which St. Petersburg faces, scarcely differ from those, which daunt the administrations of Paris or New York.

Presently Russia is aware of the danger, which is connected with the growth of the Fascist tendencies. Only recently the problem of "skins" attracted the attention of only a few enthusiasts from among the ranks of the law enforcers of the liberal-political outlook. Now they are the matter of concern of the state bodies and influential social groups. Thus, a group of Russian politicians "the workers of the cultural sphere and sportsmen" announced the creation of the "The Union of Civil Resistance to the Fascist Phenomena". The theme of aggressive nationalism is being seriously discussed by the members of the Public Chamber, created recently.

Alekssei Makarkin,
Deputy general director of the Center of the Political
Technologies
(The material has been prepared by the RIA Novosti)

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Private correspondents from "CaucAsia"



Surge of nationalism - a shameful episode in the history of a great country or a long term policy?

photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

Fear of blunt ignorance, the feeling of destitute and loneliness. Once, long time ago {At the end of 80-s, I think} we saw a young black student from the bus window. I was shocked because of the outrage of an elderly well dressed woman, who was telling her grandson: "Look at this animal, and he's blind drunk at that " How much hatred, wrath and loathing did her voice contain, how much poison did she feed to her grandson. "Whenever I hear about Fascism, or racism, or nationalism, or chauvinism, I always recall that hissing sound. Alas, the whole thing did not start today all of a sudden. The man in the street is cruel. It's good, that I can speak about it and cry Sometimes I become desperate because of inconsolableness and pessimism, as my outrage does not really change anything.

Umida Akhmedova, Tashkent

Hi, everybody! Before receiving the mail, I watched "Vremena" hosted by S. Pozner. The topic under discussion was igniting of international hatred. According to the Russian Legislation, instituting criminal proceedings on these charges is possible only when some public action, which urged others {people} to commit violence against other nationalities, was organized. If this was not the case, then the crime is treated in accordance with the articles of the administrative criminal code as a particular type of crime: hooliganism, robbery, homicide. Nothing is mentioned about the nationality.

Zhirinovski says, {if one can speak about him in these terms} that people are killed in Russia everyday - Russians, young and old. Russians are killing Russians, just like non-Russians - non-Russians, non-Russians - Russians and vice versa. This is all linked with the high level of crime in the whole. The writers are talking about the absence of spirituality and one cause for all. They've provided an example: "Somewhere in the North they are building a gigantic industrial facility. The builders are the people of different nationalities and there is no crime there, people have no time for brawling and squabbling, they are busy working. Whatever is happening now is explained away by the social problems.

I personally witnessed in Karaganda the clashes in the buses and the market, when Kazakhs bullied Russians by phrases of the "get the hell out of here" type. Another variant: a Russian woman is offered a seat in the bus and during the follow on conversation somebody tells her: "Don't leave our country, as who will work for us instead of you." Hearing this is hurtful and unpleasant. The people, who behave like this are either drunk or angered or just ill. Nobody really wants to argue with them. So everybody is silent, tending his own business. Some agree with this, others are indignant, but just sit silently. I express 100% solidarity to anti-Fascist actions, organized in Russia.

Nina Erkaeva, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Hallo, everybody! Nationalism is everywhere, this is a fact. But in Russia it is enjoying the state support. It is enough to see the TV sequences on the special forces, on Chechnia {which is delicately not mentioned there}, on murders of the citizens of the Central Asia or the Caucasus. Even in the news programs of all the leading Russian TV channels, they always say "a Tajik woman has been killed", "a Kirgiz woman has been beaten", "An Uzbek has been severely wounded", as if some animal has been wounded or killed. They never say " the citizen of Tajikistan or Kirgizstan. Simply "a Tajik has been beaten"" as if he has no name, no country. Isn't this some type of nationalism?

When they speak about these sorts of excesses abroad, they always emphasize "a citizen of Germany has been injured", a French citizen has been beaten" and not just "French or German".

The criminal chronicles of the Russian TV channels relish in the details of the crimes committed, if they involve the people from our region or the Caucasus. At the same time, a special emphasis is laid on the nationality, of the "what do you expect from him, he is a Tajik, this is why he has committed a crime" sorts.

I personally witnessed the fact of nationalism in Moscow, in the market, not far from the Medvedkovo underground station. We had to buy some products and my friend suggested to buy them from his friend, a refugee from Abkhazia, as he said, There was a Russian woman standing behind us in the line. When her turn came, she raised her head and seeing the black haired woman, she said with contempt: "Hey, black, beat it!" Naturally, people stepped in and there ensued a lot of brawling and the woman selling vegetables started to cry because of the insult.

Im not saying anything about the Sherementevo airport, which is a symbol of everything this.

Almaz Kallet, town of Osch, Kyrgyzstan

Lali NIKOLAVA
Georgia

war and peace

ACUTE DEFICIT OF WHITE HANDKERCHIEFS

Once during an interview, I asked the speaker of Georgian parliament: how do you assess your role in the November revolution? If there had been no women among the leaders, how different the process and correspondingly the results would have been?

Nino Burjanadze answered:

I can't really evaluate my role. But, I personally know too well its importance. To say nothing about the fact, that had it not been for the chairperson of the parliament standing together with the revolutionaries, everything would have turned out differently. That a woman was standing by, is a serious factor. I tried to smooth out the situation, I was careful. Misha Saakashvili is a very decisive person. So it was very important to properly balance, to avoid the danger of confrontation. To a certain extent, I deserve a credit for the peaceful outcome of the revolution. I won't be too modest, because recently I've been noticing, that if a person in politics is too modest, he's thought of as not really understanding the reality.

Continuing the theme, I asked:

How do you think, had there been more women in power in Georgia in 1989-1992, could we have prevented the wars?

"All is contingent upon the personal qualities of an individual - answered Nino Burjanadze.. "Although it's possible, that if in 1989-1992 there had been more women in the government in Georgia, many things might have been different today. A woman makes more careful decisions and tries to avoid conflicts. It's possible, that more tolerance could have been shown in the Abkhazian issue and it's not ruled out, that in that case the peaceful solution of the problem could have been found easier."

At the same time, the speaker of the parliament noted an important role of the media in the relationship between the conflicting parties. She brought an example of the results of providing distorted information.

Some of the Russian mass media, interpret what has been said to their own liking - she noted - totally changing the content. E.g. in one of my interviews I said, that "the peaceful solution of the Abkhazian problem is the only correct solution. But if, God forbid, the war starts, I would be induced to send my children too. Naturally, as all the other mothers, I don't want this to happen. What else should I have said? Do I have a right to detachedly behold how other mothers are suffering? From the whole context, they selected the fragment, where I spoke about the sons. The result was, that Nino Burjanadze sends her sons to fight in Abkhazia. Naturally, if Abkhazians hear this, what trust can we talk about. Abkhazians must not play according to the rules, imposed on them from the outside.

Some time after I recorded this interview, I managed to visit Abkhazia and in reality I happened to hear there some people complaining about the fact, that there could be no trust, when the speaker of the Georgian parliament is intending to send her children to fight with them.

It's surprising, that such declarations are made by a woman - Aneta Akhuba, the mother of an Abkhaz boy, who had died in the war, was indignant. She is one of the members of the organization uniting the mothers of the sons, who had died in the war. Her friends, the mothers sharing her grief, who sat near her, agreed with her.

I explained to them, that this was an assembled footage, that a reply of the speaker was torn out of the context and then I start-

ed to tell them about the peaceful initiatives, which the Georgian government had been carrying out to restore the trust and peace between our nations" As, today, the state welcomes and stimulates those measures, which are directed at promoting the Abkhaz and Osetian languages and cultures; it became fashionable to study the languages of these nations, to develop their potential in Georgia. The translations from Georgian are done, the sculptures of the prominent representatives of these nations are opened etc.

I do not know, whether my arguments convinced my interlocutors. In response, they continued to cite other Georgian politicians, who, in their words: "periodically "threaten", directly or indirectly, Abkhazians and Osetians, by renewing the hostile war activities. In their words, any peaceful initiatives of the Georgian party are considered by them as the measures carried out for the purpose of diverting the attention, showing to the international organizations their peace loving potential.

It's not a secret to anyone, that such peacekeeping projects earn a lot of money and the Georgian NGO-s get big grants, implementing them - thinks Svetlana Barshtsits, an Abkhazian entrepreneur. Frankly saying, we hoped, that the advent of the new government in Georgia would give the possibility to our nations to start from the clean slate, as the members of the new government had not participated in the war against Abkhaz.. But having heard the very first speeches of the newly elected president, all hopes vanished".

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia has survived two ethnical conflicts and a civil war. The times were hard. Then, by means of a revolution, which was carried out in a civilized way and what's more important, without bloodshed, the government changed in Georgia. Every year everything is changing in the country and egged on by the Western and American friends Georgia is on the way to the big and comfortable European family. It endeavors to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities it took on with Europeans and Americans and in the words of the first persons of the country, the real membership of NATO is looming ahead for 2008 . It is well known, that one of the main criteria for the Membership of NATO is abiding by certain norms and principles, including peaceful solution of inter-ethnical conflicts.

During his New Year congratulations speech, the minister of defense of Georgia said, that the year 2007 he is intending to meet in Tskhinvali. Logically and in accordance with the assumed obligations, this must be done by peaceful means. At the same time, saying nothing about the penchant of the minister for the military operations, {one of such operations, threatening to grow into a real war was carried out in Tskhinvali region in the summer of 2004.}one can not but notice, that the word peacekeeping has become very unpopular in the governmental circles in Georgia today.

It seems, that the plans of the government do not envisage acknowledgement of the mistakes, made by its predecessors at the beginning of the 90-s. Today this is considered a bad tone. Moreover, understanding all the difficulties on the road to peace building, it chose to opt for the easier, if less efficient road - the road of emotionally influencing and threatening the opponent. The peacemakers, who are making painstaking efforts to restore trust between the conflicting parties, are ironically called by the first persons of the state pseudo-pacifists.

It's no longer surprising, when such a position is manifested by the authorities, but when it's publicly shared by a woman in power, in this case - Maia Nadiadze, the leader of the parliamentary majority, it seems, that all the aspirations towards peacemaking are naive and deprived of all content, as for their effective realization, the state support, which enjoys certain leverage for influencing the situation, is absolutely necessary.

These are political games of men, targeted at particular effect and particular audience. As a result, our brothers and sisters, Abkhazians and Osetians, together with whom we sincerely, as earlier, want to live, unfortunately, see a totally different picture. The party of Peace in Georgia has been discredited and is becoming faceless and vulnerable, while the party of war, where currently even the women are voluntarily enlisting, is gathering momentum.

Diana PETRIASHVILI,
Georgia

bad work

WE WANTED AS BEST but it happened as always

Not long ago, the TV channel Alania emerged in Georgia. This is a special propaganda project, which mainly broadcasts for the Tskhinvali region population, the South Osetioans, the zone of conflict

Alania lavishly informs its audience about the cultural life of Tbilisi, about the increased budget of Georgia, about building the new schools and hospitals, about the youth discos and grants, received for the improvement of the infrastructure of the town of Tskhinvali. Totally absent are the criminal chronicles and the live broadcasts from the rallies of opposition and of the street vendors. Recently, there was a serious riot in the prison of Tbilisi, some men died, some were wounded. Half of the town gathered near the city penitentiary at night, the second half watched the event on TV. One could not really hush up the whole thing, this is why Alania guiltily touched briefly upon the goings on in the news program. There was no footage.

The channel daily broadcasts the entertainment programs, with the musical clips, congratulations, SMS, phone calls to the program, competitions. You have to guess correctly who the singer is or which melody it is. The winner's prize is invitation to one of the prestigious Tbilisi Restaurants, or walking around the city with an ice-cream in hand or something else. The main thing is, that all of this is done under the friendly guidance of both of the anchorpersons. Their names are Masha and Gosha.

If somebody calls Masha and Gosha from Tbilisi or, say, Rustavi, they do not let him really feel at home; they bid good bye pretty soon, if he mulls over the question more than three minutes. If somebody calls from Tskhinvali - everything is the other way round - Masha and Gosha bide their time and tip off the caller. They do their best to see the Osetian to the restaurant and overwhelm the son of a prodigal nation by their hospitality. In accordance with the scenario, the next table to the invitee is occupied by a "tested" man, who, when the time is ripe, sails up to Masha and Gosha and the Osetian brother and blurts out something like - oh, here you are??!! Can I take your photograph? Can I take two. My wife will swoon with happiness! You are our idols."

Later, it's meant to develop relationship with the "separatist", to toast peace and to bewail the lost opportunity of visiting the beautiful town of Tskhinvali by Tbilisians.

By the look of it, the Georgian party thinks, that the Osetian "separatists", having seen on TV the radiance of our life will request their de facto government in unison to come under the shelter of their de jure peers. Those, who are de facto, are also wary of such outcome.. This is why, they periodically "muffle" the TV channel Alania. But, Alania soon overcomes the technical hitches and broadcasts again on the new band wave.

It's generally believed, that the project is slowly, but firmly achieving its goal, despite some blunders, like it happened once, when a young Osetian called Gosha and Masha and instead of the answers to the questions "accurately" accused the Georgian party of the conflict and this happens when the broadcast is live. So, there is a big risk indeed.

Yes, about the risks. I think, that those Osetians, who come to visit a restaurant are risking to a certain extent. It's not easy to come to a hostile Tbilisi at the backdrop of all this propaganda. It may so happen, that their Tskhinvalian neighbors will cast stones at them, as nobody films their homecoming.

I thought over the possibility of such an approach, when I learned about the side effects of the similar project for our second hot spot, Abkhazia. Recently a summer holiday camp was organized in Tbilisi and the resorts around it by the efforts of Georgian and Abkhazian NGO-s.

It was thought, that they would make friends with the kids of the same age from the opposite side and that this would be a small brick in the big wall of the peace making process. A great idea, isn't it?

Our reporters have always run after the kids, tracing each their step on the soil of the peaceful Georgia and broadcasting each smile and the grateful remark. The evening news made it clear, that the young Abkhazians, who were born and grew up during the war and the conditions of hostility, liked it very much in Tbilisi. They like it SO MUCH, that they do not want to return to Abkhazia, to the poor, run down Sukhumi. The audience let their feelings go. Soon the kids were returned home. Not many know, what happened later. This was not shown to us. Abkhazian security forces have attacked the parents of these kids with such zeal, that many were forced to leave Sukhumi.

No, not to Tbilisi, they are not attracted by it. They are very sorry to have committed such foolishness and believed the "foe."

Thus, it becomes clear, that the main concern should be not the agitation projects, but the mutual trust, which, from whatever angle you look at it, can only be the fruit of the sincerity of the political intentions and not the clowning and juggling.



Only the words are not enough. Even if they are said on TV
Photo from "Kavkazia" archives - the author is not known.

Tamara HOVNATANIAN,
Armenia

bridges over the abyss

AZERBAIJANIAN WOMEN DO NOT WANT WAR

Armenian women want it neither

but is this a guaranty?

I'll be honest. I did not want to write about the conflict. For the first time over so many years. Despite the staunch adherence to the theme of peace making and all of my previous articles and even the researches on this account. I didn't want, because I saw clearly, that we, I mean the social sector of women in our countries, made a very little headway in overcoming the image of an enemy. . Our voices in our societies are still very weak., to stand up to the hellish machine of hatred and war furthered by our politicians. Everybody, who follows the development of political events in the region, will understand the sources of this pessimism. I hope it is temporary and the opinion of those, who continue to painstakingly build the peace, will in the long run become decisive.

" Let's not flatter ourselves" Zemfira Verdieva, a prominent leader of women's movement in Azerbaijan, uttered these words about five years ago in the answer to my question , whether the government had been heeding the voice of women. I remembered this interview, as today I think the same way as she. Moreover I found out, that this conversation, which took place in the autumn of 2001 in Armenia, is actual today as never. I'm still ready to put my signature under these words, without any reservations. I hope my interlocutors are ready to do the same.

Here are the excerpts of the interview, recorded five years ago. The saddest thing is, that what was said then, is still actual today. This means, that the peace is nether stronger nor closer.

We've been traveling to Erevan for three days, when it's only one hour's flight from Baku. This attests to the fact, that we wanted to come very much and we managed to do it - say Zemfira Verdieva. (Women of Azerbaijan) and Afar Iskanderova (Women in Music), who came to Tsakhkadzor to the international conference "Dialogue of the Civilizations, Democracy and Peace", which was organized by the Armenian Organization of Women with University Education. Afar Iskanderova, alongside with her creative profession, has been seriously involved in social activity and recently - in the peacemaking activity. Zemfira Verdieva is a corresponding member of the Azerbaijanian Academy of Sciences, a professor of philology and at the same time an acknowledged leader of the women's movement in Azerbaijan. Nobody addresses her, but as Zemfira Khanum. This orientally all inclusive word becomes her image very much. She is subtly diplomatic in answering the sensitive questions, which can not, but spring up at such meetings, while during the normal relationship, she is disarmingly sincere.

Z.V. We have been coming to the dialogue with the Armenian women long and hard. Despite our university education and scientific regalia, we preferred not to greet each other. But today, I can allow myself the whole three pleasures: first, to say what I think; second, about anything and anything and finally, wherever I want.

What do you think, when did the u-turn happen between the women's organizations of our countries? In my opinion, this was in 1998 at the Caucasus meeting in Tabakhmella {Georgia}

Z.V. Probably yes. Before that, there had been 8 difficult years. When we met in Tabakhmella, our mentality was already changed. I think I said something like that then, that we came to the threshold, when we could start talking. Forgotten are the tears, insults, mutual complaints and charges - all that, with which our relations were starting. Feelings and pain were overpowering people. We did not discriminate, who was right and who was wrong, we could only see the "image of an enemy", whom we were telling in the face all we thought. I remember that year we were speaking a lot about tolerance and to be honest, this term was brought there by you. I remember exactly, that this was the word, which the Armenian delegation brought there. And still, back in 1998, it was out of question, that I, an Azerbaijanian woman, would attend a conference in Armenia. Today, I feel completely safe myself here, in the circle of my friends and acquaintances, who met me and are caring for me each minute. You could not have imagined either, that we would invite you to Baku and you would come. But as you see, everything is possible in our lives. I'm glad, that each time I leave here with warmer feelings. One and a half year ago this was not the case and I understand why. We had to come to this. In one of the funds, which we addressed to help us out to cover our travel expenses, they asked us: "What will you do there ? What results are you awaiting? It was very difficult for me to explain and I just said, that we were going for a dialogue, which we needed that day. Thus, today we are attending a conference, the title of which itself predisposes to the dialogue. I have always been repeating and I will continue to do so, that none of us is intending to move house to the Moon. We used to be and will remain the neighbors. I want to see the result of the work, to which I devoted my life and not to worry about the fact, that I left this burden on the shoulders of my children.

I'm a scientist, I can just sit and write monographs, segregating myself from everything, that is happening in my country. But, I can't. Paper and books can wait, people can not.

It's, probably, not very easy to decide to come to Armenia? Z.V. I want to be sincere. When for the first time we were asked, who was going to Erevan, in the hall, which contained 50 people, only a few hands were raised. I understand those, who did not raise their hands. Each of us is responsible for her family, the children. They had to consult, ask their friends for the decision. For me this trip was more important than other trips {and I travel a lot}, as it brought us closer to the solution of the problem, which lay on us like a heavy burden. Unfortunately public organizations do not have the right to make decisions, they can

only express their opinions. But this is also important, as the authorities will at least know, what people think, what women think.

So you can say, that all the women, just like you, are for the peaceful solution?

Z.V. No, I can't speak for all the women. There are the refugees, who in winter came in sneakers, almost barefoot, and gowns; there are still women, who lost their sons and husbands. Women are different - kind, angry, educated, stupid " This is natural. But, I can say for sure about the women's movement, these women think about peace.

To what extent, in your opinion, is the threat of renewing military action real?

Z.V. For us, the only real thing is, that the women of Azerbaijan do not want war. There have been a lot of losses, the pain has not passed yet. Generally speaking, is there a sound minded woman, who will want war?

The problem, probably, is, how much the government is heeding women?

Z.V. Let's flatter ourselves. We know perfectly well the attitude of the government to the public organizations. We have 30 women's organizations and they do not want war. But the situation is worrisome. There are some pro-war voices heard. These are mainly the male voices, who say that the negotiation process has dragged on and there are no results. I'm concerned, that the youth, whom we protect, thinks the same way.

A.I. They say, that ill peace is better, than the harmless bickering. But, ill peace, is not a real peace at all. It is indefiniteness. I have a children's magazine "Little Crane", which was given to me by Georgian women. In it an Azerbaijani boy writes to an IDP boy from Abkhazia.. "So, you lost your motherland, I lost too. I do not remember my homeland and my father is often telling me about it - Keldbajara." This is really hard.

The feelings of the Azerbaijani boy from Keldbajara, just like the feelings of an Armenian boy from Getashan are worth understanding and commiserating. But will a new war lift their sorrow?

A.I. Naturally, one has to explain to the people, that war is not the best way of solving our problems. The main thing is to look for the ways of mutual understanding and try to preserve the peace to the very last.

Z.V. At least not to blame oneself later. This is why we are here in Armenia.

P.S. The address made by the participants of the conference to the women organizations of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia says: "We call on the politicians, governments and parliaments of the countries of the region not to push our countries to the abyss of war and chaos, rule out violence as the means of regulating the regional conflicts, restrain from encouraging the renewal of military activities.



photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

Valentina KHANAS,
Ukraine

testing democracy

THE UZBEK REFUGEES TESTED WITH THEIR OWN DESTINIES

the democracy of Ukrainian officials

their deportation has mainly been unnoticed in our country, as the Ukrainians were more pre-occupied with the parliamentary and the local elections, than the fate of the Uzbek refugees

In mid February, the Ukraine denied to offer political asylum to the 10 Uzbek refugees. Today it wants to put itself right by saying, that there were all the legal bases for this. Still, Oleg Ribachuk, the head of the Ukrainian president's secretariat, conceded, that "their expulsion from the country had been carried out by violating the procedures;

they were not given seven days to appeal against the decision of the court on their deportation. At the same time he approved the deportation of the Uzbek citizens. They belonged to a radical Islamic group, the name of which I, unfortunately, can not pronounce - said Ribachuk.

Ribachuk confirmed the fact, that the extradition of the Uzbek citizens was carried out on the orders of Islam Karimov's government. He also complained, that the Ukraine lost the information war in the case with the deportation.

Meanwhile, the dry diplomatic citation today assumed emotional coloring. One of the leaders of Uzbek opposition was sentenced to ten years in prison. Officially, she was indicted on the charges of theft and tax evasion. The Uzbek opposition draws our attention to another aspect: the woman was detained immediately after the return from Moscow, where she had criticized Islam Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan.

The law enforcers say, that " the extradited Uzbeks had witnessed the last year's bloody events in Andizhan. They claim, that "the version of belonging to the terrorist organization, is nothing, but an attempt of Kiev, to put itself right in the eyes of the world. In the opinion of Maxim Butkevich, the representative of the organization "Initiative Without Borders", terrorists are not covered by the <Convention on Refugees>. Practically, this was the only way out for the Ukrainian government. Irene Hun, the general secretary of the "Amnesty International", addressed Victor Yuschenko, the Ukrainian president, in a letter of protest. The official Kiev's decision has been protested by "The Human Rights Watch", the OSCE, German and Russian organizations, defending human rights. "Forceful return of the refugees to the country of origin" is a serious violation of the principle of no return of the refugees as well as of the international obligations assumed by the Ukraine, namely after signing the Ukrainian Convention of the UN on Refugees {1951} and the Convention Against Torture 1984"; quotes the press office of the head of the OSCE, Karel Gukht. The German human rights defending organization "Pro Asyl", dealing with the refugees' rights, called on the European Union and the German Government to immediately stop cooperation with the Ukraine in this sphere.

Hattam Hadjmatov, one of the leaders of the organization uniting the Uzbek refugees in the Ukraine said, that the Uzbeks, deported from the Crimea, were apprehended by militia, after they landed in Tashkent. Ismail Didijanov, the chairman of the anti-Karimov democratic forum of Uzbekistan declared, that the president of the Ukraine, Victor Yuschenko, swaps Uzbeks for gas". We were "accorded greater attention" after 30 January, when Yuschenko met Karimov. They agreed to cooperate economically, which means politically too.

WHAT do the ordinary Ukrainians think on that account?

The poll carried out by the Institute of Sociological Studies shows, almost 70% of the polled did not deem it necessary to query about the fate of the extradited. But, when the issue of their possible execution in their homeland was raised 75% of the Ukrainian women and only 45% of the Ukrainian men came out against the decision of the government on extradition.

Svetlana - 40 years old:

The Ukraine is rather wary about the refugees. The scheme - it's not my business - has been applied. Knowing, that the refugees may be executed, the government should not have extradited the them. This is not right.

Anna - 32:

At the beginning, one should have found out in DETAIL, what awaits the refugees in their country. If for the political activity in their own country they face the threat of the death penalty, our government must not have permitted the extradition. Not long before that, they themselves had been in the opposition and demanded the rights for all.

Alexandra - 21:

I personally don't have to do anything with it, but when they are threatened with the death sentence, the extradition is not a right step.

Ivan - 49:

It serves them right, to have been extradited. One must not litter the Ukraine. Everybody pretends, to be exercising the politics. But I am convinced, that they are terrorists. You can expect anything from the Asians. They are not counting us for people. Only the trouble - help, save.

Ruslan - 29:

They mustn't have to come to the Ukraine. We have enough problems as it is. If they had been sent away, there was the reason for it. Such questions do not bother me.

Alexander - 20:

It does not mean anything. Who cares who said what. If they have a country like we have, they do not have to be afraid of anything. In our country they also promise to jail the bandits, but they don't.

P.S. I'm ashamed of those, who play with the human fates. Irrespective of the citizenship and the political orientation, the machinations or the ignorance. Naturally, none of the Ukrainian officials has been held responsible for anything. Note, all of them are the reps of the law enforcers, all of them are men.



...As a result you can only pray for the fate of the refugees

Photo by Umida Akhmedova, Azerbaijan

Aiten ALIEVA,
Azerbaijan

the society and AIDS

HARDEST OF ALL - BEING AFRAID OF THE PEOPLE

HIV CARRIER WAS AFRAID NOT OF THE DEATH, BUT OF THE SHAME

Saida was born to a well off family. Father and mother and three brothers protected her and cared for her. They married her to a well-to-do and decent man. They had a son and a daughter. They respected each other. But the collapse of the USSR caused her husband to lose his job. He, as many people in that time, went to Russia to earn his livelihood and from there he proceeded on to the countries of Orient. The husband has been absent for two years, but he returned with good money, lived in the family for one year and then returned to Dubai. Saida continued her life calmly. But a year after his visit she started to feel herself worse and worse. About half a year later her husband disappeared.

They gave me different diagnoses, one worse than the other. Once I was told to check myself against AIDS. This was a bolt of thunder from the clear skies. I could never imagine, that this could happen to me. I became furious at the doctor and cursed him. But the said word, makes me remember him again and again..

You can't even understand, how ashamed I was when I went to the anonymous center to be tested for blood. Though I was told, that nobody would learn about it, I was ashamed even of those people, who worked there. You can imagine my reaction, when they told me, that I was HIV positive.

I felt the ground slip from under my legs. I fainted. It's a good thing, that I specially did not take with me my personal telephone directory. They did not know, whom to call. When I came round, the first idea, that came to my head, was to run away without any destination. Not to return home, not to tell my parents anything. I forgot how to speak.. There were people in the center, who persuaded me to go through psychological rehab courses.

You know, at the beginning I forgot, that AIDS is a deadly disease. I was worried because of the shame. I always thought, that AIDS is contracted only by perverts and outcasts and suddenly I found myself among them. How? Why?

I tried to hide everything from the family. . I said, that I had pneumonia and I was being treated for that. As I had never worked, it was easy for me to attend the courses and seminars of psychological rehabilitation.

There I learned, that AIDS is the same type of illness as cancer, stroke etc. No one is immune to that and it can be contracted by any descent person. They say, there is nothing worse than death, but believe me it was a load off my shoulders, when I learned, that to be ill with AIDS is nothing to be ashamed of..

Then I learned, why my husband had disappeared. He learned about his diagnosis and suffered from the same feelings that I. Though physically I felt much worse, psychologically I was ready to tell my family about my predicament.

At the beginning I told them, that I worked in the center for AIDS helping people to learn more about that illness. My family was surprised - why? They decided, that I needed some sort of diversion, to think less about different types of illness.

Then I started to leave behind some brochures, explanatory booklets. Then the notification of my husband's death anticipat-



photo by Polina Miloradovich, Georgia

ed me. The medical conclusion from Dubai said, that he had died of AIDS. Everybody understood everything immediately.

How did they react? Everybody cried, mother and father, brothers and their wives. The kids did not understand anything and we decided not to tell our relatives anything. It is true, that three days later my father asked me to live separately and they took the kids with them.

I understood him. This, as I remember happened, when I incidentally cut myself in the kitchen. I noticed then, that my sister in law started to clean everything around with chlorine. I understood, that though nobody said so, they bewared of me.

I left. I started to live alone. My parents often visit me bringing the children. My brothers have been visiting me less and less and now they stopped their visits completely, their wives do not let them go. Had it not been for the work in the center, where I try to help people, who are in the same situation, I would have died of boredom long ago.

But Chinese say, "get ready for death from the very birth". I'm getting ready. And you know I'm not scared. It had been harder to overcome my shame in front of the people than the fear of death.

During the first four months of the year, there had been 48 HIV positive cases in Azerbaijan. Thus, the total number of the virus carriers in the country reached 976. As Galib Aliev, the director of the Azerbaijan Center for Fighting against AIDS said, in 2005, as compared with 2004, the number of the AIDS carriers increased by 98 persons. " According to the forecasts of the world renowned experts, to correctly track down the exact number of the infected, it's necessary to multiply the official figures by 10. According to the existing data, women comprise 19.7 % from the total number of the HIV carriers in Azerbaijan. But, this does not show the real picture either, as the sex business is not subject to control. If it were possible to carry out an epidemiological monitoring in this sphere, then this index would not be 19%, but much higher, - Says Galib Aliev.

The source: <http://www.day.az/news/society/47578.htm>

Lubov SOKOLOVA,
Russia

military preparations at full go

HUMANITY WITH THE IRON TASTE

Recently our president held a speech containing traditional message. The strongest point there, naturally, had to do with demography

The call to love women and love them productively, made on behalf and under the orders of the military agency, rang the bell Oh, yes. All of this had been invoked by the salutes commemorating the V-Day. Hitler's soldiers, going on leave, were receiving from the command a cradle, food and a relevant advice, tantamount to order. German Army suffered from the deficit of cannon fodder, that is, it was undergoing a demographic catastrophe. So, for the Faterland one had to do this quick - and back to the front. Fascist demography was saying nothing about the life expectancy and life quality, the main goal being the reproduction of the biological material. My firm request is not to draw historical parallels! And still, why did the head of the state, on behalf of the military agency, stress, that the human resources have become a priority? The army requires 250 000 soldiers per piece? Does the president's remark relate the expenses for stimulating the birth-rate to the army expenses? Has he crossed the line between the cynicism and honesty? I can not be to sure.. Had he said, that they would give more for the boys, than the girls But, who knows, maybe the MOD is preparing an order on the compulsory recruitment of all the citizens without exception and the value of the people of different sexes is becoming equal in the eyes of the government. Whatever concerns

the pensioners, with them everything is clear. Life expectancy is not on the presidential agenda. It would have been economically expedient to limit the existence with the pension age. O.K. the Russian men do not live up to the pension age. But, the women are so persistent in existence, that one hates to speak about it. So, we do not speak about it. One has to starve them covertly. But these are only assumptions. In reality, it's not just starving them, but getting rid of them and not of those, who have crossed the child bearing age, but you know whom. Till now, not a single speech of the president has been so thickly saturated with militarism. One thing is not clear though. Whom are we going to fight? Well, this is not a woman's business. The head was speaking with men on behalf of the men. I, as a person {and body} incapable of fertilizing women (lovingly), am not interesting for him. He is interested in the resources - child bearing female species.

One more thing, I noticed. Today, the French psychotherapist, who is wanted by the Interpol for committing multiple rapes, requested political asylum in Russia. He's heard a lot and made a choice, there is a big choice here, who to cure and fertilize.



But a human resource does not want to fight!
photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia



verbatim

..Now, about the main thing. What is the main thing we have? The MOD knows, what is the main thing we have. The talk will really be about love, about women and children. About family. And, about the most acute problem of modern Russia - demography.

You know, on average the number of people in our country decreases by 700 000 each year. We have raised this issue not once, but by and large we haven't done much. To solve this problem, we have to do the following. First - lower the death rate. Second - develop efficient migration policy. Third - increase the birth rate.

From the message of the Russian president. The full text is on the official site of the president.
<http://www.kremlin.ru>

xenophobia

ONLY FOR THE PERSONS OF SLAV NATIONALITY

and to the Caucasians, the access is denied

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION HAS STARTED TO BE PRACTISED IN RUSSIA

The newspaper "Moskovski Komsomolets" writes about a case of Muscovite Masha, who decided to celebrate her birthday in a restaurant. The friends recommended to her the bar "Stoi-ka", not expensive, snug and the main thing - near her house, on the Obruchev street. The manager of the bar was courteous to Masha. The menu and the layout of the tables was discussed quickly and there remained only the question of pre-payment. "I forgot to warn you" - the manager noted, grinning cordially - we have two strict rules. First - we keep out those who are blind drunk; second - we do not let in the people of Caucasian nationality."

In other words, if you decided to celebrate your birthday in the "Stoi-ka" bar, you yourself have to be Russian and you must also tell your Armenian or Azerbaijanian friends: "sorry guys, I love you very much, but the bar, where I'm having a party, has such rules. We can meet some other time. They have to nod in confirmation, as it is clear - apartheid - what can you do? Masha tried to explain, that among her friends there were also the Azerbaijanians, businessmen of good standing, real Muscovites. "Even if they come here by chopper, we won't let them in", - said the manager, alluding to the rights.

Existence of such rules brings up the idea, that the given concrete manager of the concrete bar is a latent skinhead. But Stoi-ka is not just one bar, but the whole chain of bars in the capital. By the way, on the site of this firm, one can



Is it possible, that they will not let us, the Georgians, even with a barrel organ?! There remains only one thing, we can do - hang out a warning "To the citizens with balalaika, the access is denied..."

photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

find an interesting form to be filled by those, who want to work in Stoi-ka. It contains a couple of dozen questions, written in a joking manner. It's noteworthy, that the fifth question in the form is about the nationality of the applicant.

It's not clear, what criteria does the bar have for the evaluation of appearance and the features of the face. Maybe, they resort to the help of calipers. Such methods have been created long time ago. You can read about those in the materials of the Nurnberg tribunal, writes "Moskovski Komsomolets"

NEWS.ru.com managed to find the similar "rules" in other entertainment establishments of Moscow too. Thus the web site of the Moscow club "Zone" says, that the club denies access to the persons of the Caucasian nationality, having semblance to the photos of the persons looked for by the militia". The majority of the night entertainment establishments of the capital stick to this rule, although they do not openly speak about this.

*The source:
the cite www.owl.ru with reference to the portal " The human rights in Russia"*

Alexander IMEDASHVILI,
IA "News-Georgia"

embargo

DO NOT BLAME WINE

what became the reason
for inflating a diplomatic conflict



photos by Alexander Imedashvili, Georgia

To solve it you do not have to resort to parliamentary fighting. At the height of Georgian-Russian wine-trade-diplomatic war, the reps of the Global Association of wine lovers staged a protest action in front of the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi, throwing a traditional Georgian party

The table was laid for twelve people, around which, the participants of the action sat. During a number of hours, they had been raising toasts to Georgia, Russia and Georgian wine. Beside the traditional Georgian dishes, like mchadi (corn bread), khinkali, Khachapuri, kebab and shashlik, the table abounded in the whole assortment of red and white Georgian wines - factory made as well as home made.

With our action we support all the wine makers in the world. The reps of our association include the citizens of different countries, who love wine, including Georgian wine - the participants of the party told "News Georgia". One of them, Timothy, from the United States, said: "I have lived in Russia for some years. I love that country very much. I love Russian culture. But, I'd like to say, that the decision to prohibit the import of Georgian wines to Russia is unjust. Georgian wine is simply excellent. I can say where in Russia one can buy high quality Georgian wine. If you buy wine for 30 roubles, it's, naturally not wine at all. But this is a problem for Russia, not for Georgia. The organizers of the action prepared a manifesto, wherein they propose to adopt a law, which will enable the citizens of different countries to drink wine of their own choice and to their own discretion. At the same time the representatives of the Association categorically oppose falsification of wines. The organization comprises the citizens of different countries, namely the US, Germany, France, Brazil, who live or work in Georgia. As the reps of the Association told "News Georgia" agency, their organization was created soon after Russia put an embargo on Georgian exports of wine to Russian market. The goal of the Global Association of Wine Lovers is defending of human rights and acknowledgement of the right of people to drink quality wine.

reply from Russia

I'm following the development of the "wine" events and thinking about life. The Morning. Inei. People are congregated at the bus stop. The transport is not coming. The nerves. The faces are gloomy because of the lack of sleep and the anticipation of the boredom of the working day. Only two persons stand out from the uniform line. He and she. They are sitting on the chair. Between them, in the cut off plastic balloon for the unknown liquid, a packet of the glass cleaner "Rodnichok" is snugly positioned. They drink in turn from the cut off corner, caringly look at each other and relish in the harmony of the drab morning, harmony of the coming day and their own souls, washed to the complete transparency by the glass cleaner "Rodnichok". Are these the people to be scared by the pesticides?

Lyuba Sokolova,
appreciating the taste of Saperavi

yes, about Saperavi

GEORGIAN WINE LIVES AND WINS

(but you can't buy it for one dollar...)

Georgian wine "Saperavi" won silver medal at the international competition of wines and alcoholic beverages "Vinnaya Karta Open" - 2006, held in Moscow on 25 April. The agency Black Sea Press has been told about this in the Tbilvino company. The jury of the competition included prominent specialists from Italy, France Russia. The victor wine - "SAPERAVI Special Reserve 2002" - of the 12 months of maturity.

Tbilisi, 3 May. I.A. "News Georgia"

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