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photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

Non-governmental sector is only the part of the society. But an exemplary part. There are a lot of women leaders in our region; the number of women NGOs is perhaps higher than that of men's.

What is the reason and why is the number of women within the third sector higher than that in politics or business? Because in the third sector, everything or almost everything is being decided on the base of a competition; there is nobody in the sector who would remove you from working because of your gender and you do not need to have a starting capital there. The third sector also values the quality of a proposed idea and the level of performance. A sponsoring organization, generally prefers working with those partners who write accurate applications and precise reports. This sector works at solving the problems that might look non-magisterial for the state; the state is who hands over these problems to the non-governmental sector. This is how it should be working in a country with developed democracy.

But in our reality, civil sector is likely to become the main defender of civil rights and freedoms. Civil society is exactly who points attention to the problems like trafficking, domestic violence, elections violations, environmental problems and other. We work at those issues we were never asked to work at: conflicts resolution, elections legislation, institutional development of the authority.

Sometimes the activeness of non-governmental field surprises, and you start thinking: are these

NON-governmental?! Sometimes it looks like the government and the third sector exchanged duties: NGOs implement large-scaled actions of national level, while the government is rather passive and not really familiar with the matter... Sometimes non-governmental activists enter state bodies, however. Actually, some of us are already welcome to participate in the 'state' meetings or to be experts and consultants. But there still is a huge difference in the operation of these two fields.

In the circumstances of transition, the non-governmental sector itself, is the subject of the same challenges the society faces. The work that is supposed to be one's destination sometimes becomes the source for earning money. In this context, a partner organization may become your competitor.

In some countries of our region, like in Uzbekistan, in Russia, there can be already witnessed certain attacks on the NGO sector. New registrations, financial checks, new forms of reporting, new laws... Someone definitely needs all this. Maybe someone is jealous about those modest funds we achieve? Or, perhaps, we scared someone?

Russia

pressing

THE STATE DEMANDS CONTROL

over the entire public activity of the citizens

500 Russian human rights activists and public figures protest against the attempts of the state to take control over social unions

The reason for protest is the bill prepared by the State Duma strictly regulating activity of the nongovernmental organizations. Legal experts believe that the initiative of Duma members contradicts the Constitution of the Russian Federation as well as international norms; and thus it will lead to liquidation of various associations. Representations of the international funds will be those who suffer first of all. The authors of the bill state, that the document is directed against the extremist organizations.

Over five hundred activists from Russian regions joined the statement of protest. "Implementation of the bill will bring Russian civil society to at least 15 years ago," the statement reads. It should be noted that alike consolidated actions of Russian human rights experts was not observed throughout many years; this is very understandable, as the initiative of the lawmakers concerns the existence of public organizations.

The draft law On Amendments to Several Legal Acts of Russian Federation entered the stage of State Duma discussions on Nov. 8. The bill has been prepared by a number of deputies practically from all Duma factions. According to the Russian ministry of justice, today in Russia there are over 150 thousand public associations registered. No one knows how many of them function without registration. Thus, the lawmakers decided to toughen control over the activities of both registered and non-registered organizations. Authors of the initiative also suggest introducing obligatory registration within state bodies of public

associations without the status of the legal person.

The unanimous discontent of human rights community has caused the offer to introduce obligatory financial reporting of NGOs to the state. The bill assumes supervising expenditure of an organization's funds. Officials will acquire the right to inspect the organizations once a year. The bill also allows to supervise NGOs by ecological, fire, epidemiological and other bodies of the state control. Human rights experts are assured that the future law "creates ground for an despotism of officials and selective application of the law".

Foreign foundations, operating at the territory of Russia are those who suffered the most. Authors of the initiative suggest them to be registered as the Russian legal persons, which is impossible for the majority of foreign organizations due to certain legal reasons, experts believe. Besides, it is supposed to forbid operation of founders and participants of the Russian public associations in the case they do not have Russian citizenship.

The initiative of lawmakers became logical continuation of the line designated by the president of Russia. On May, 26th, 2004 Vladimir Putin announced that for some public organizations operating at the territory of the Russian Federation a priority problem is "reception of financing from influential foreign funds" and service of "doubtful commercial interests".

"I should tell you, that when it is a question of infringements of fundamental and basic human rights and of real interests of people, the voice of these organizations is sometimes even not audible. No wonder: they simply cannot "bite the hand" which feeds them," the president stated.

If the Duma members work hard enough, as it became usual for today's Duma, the bill can become the law and will be put into operation since January 1, 2006.



photo by Diana Petriashvili, Georgia

*information from RINTI website;
RINTI - Resources of Intellectual Information,*

17.11.2005

<http://www.rinti.ru/grants/fulldocsr.dws?dui=31883>

Nina ERKAEVA,
KAZAKHSTAN

NGO workaday routine

BEING A FRIEND AND AN ENEMY

it is just as we would have two civil societies: one of them is being developed by socially active citizens; another one - under the strange initiative of power structures

I received a phone call from akymat, inviting me to be one of the founders of Civil alliance of NGOs at our Karaganda district. I requested time to think about the proposal and the list of all founders. Then I began thinking - why was I offered such an honor?

...In late 1980-es we registered public association of teachers called Education and Development. Nobody pushed us towards this idea, and did not promise any dividends. Simply, after 10 years of work in the experimental mode, we decided that we were ready to become an independent legal person. At that time, initiatives of teachers were encouraged; school directors even liked to admit that at their schools there were innovators. Colleagues either condemned us or looked at us as at abnormal. But we liked what we did, and we also liked that when united, we became more solid, more serious and more professional. We never considered an idea of turning the NGO into the mean of additional profit; we only invested all our resources in the association and were not gaining anything rather than a regular salary.

In the beginning of 2000, situation has changed. There was a slogan: in the strong state there should be a developed civil society. There started conversations on necessity of financing civil initiatives by the state. Public associations and public Funds began to grow, as mushrooms after the rain. Along with this there appeared definite jealousy towards us, the veterans of the third sector, there appeared claims and disputes regarding who is the 'really good' NGO activist.

At last, within the frameworks of the state support to nongovernmental organizations, there was some money allocated, but the question is about what organizations were approved as recipients of the aid. The reasons behind preferential attitude to these organizations are simple. For example, in many cases the funding was obtained by those organizations that enjoyed support or friendship of an official. Those organizations that do not have 'necessary' friends seek donors in the international foundations, while their competitors get state funding.

In my opinion, presently there appeared an idea to get rid of the organizations that are not backed by the state. The reason is that these organizations are too active and participate in all tenders to obtain funding, thus hampering the process of distributing money among more 'friendly' NGOs.

This is how there appeared an idea on inserting amendments into the legislation, that would limit independence of public organizations. These amendments do not scare at all the 'friends.' They did not even participate anyhow in that struggle of NGO activists for their independence. They did not sign any appeals, did not hold press conferences, did not work on education of MPs. Under the presidential inquiry, the constitutional council made its own conclusion and recognized that the amendments offered by the parliament were Constitution-contradicting. It is a victory of old NGOs, which managed to unite and to conduct campaign for the rights. But what is surprising, is that practically none of active members of this campaign were among the delegates of the 2nd Civil Forum, held in September 2005, which was expected to be the meeting of the strongest social organizations. It made me think that there are two civil societies in our countries: one of them is really being developed under the initiative of the citizens, while another one works under the initiative of power structures.

But let's return to the Civil Alliance to review the reasons of its formation.

After the 2nd Civil Forum, where the head of the state approved the idea of Civil alliances' creation, they began to be registered quickly in all districts of the republic. There is no doubt that the initiative goes from the above, as it is impossible to believe that in reality so many NGOs from different parts of Kazakhstan made simultaneous decision to unite together. The initiators of this process became local departments of internal policy at regional akymats. The founder organizations of alliances were also chosen by them; at least - this is how everything happened in Karaganda.

Thus, what is my role in this process? To be just a formal founder? So that some others would show that they do have a regular founder, who is not close to the local authorities?

After long meditations I have made a decision to be a part of founders... It is not the first time for me to be an outsider; someone should work together with executive authority and force it to reckon with you and with the declarations they voice. We are, of course, a minority. Out of 13 founders of the Civil Alliance, 10 of them are 'friends' while only three organizations are 'outsiders.' I don't know how much will we be able to change, but I am sure that we will be able to become at least a barrier against money laundering. The Alliance is a good base for the development, but the question for me is wither it will be possible to use it not only for

NOVEMBER, 25

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Violence against women remains pervasive worldwide. It is the most atrocious manifestation of the systemic discrimination and inequality women continue to face, in law and in their everyday lives, around the world. It occurs in every region, country, and culture, regardless of income, class, race or ethnicity.

Gender-based violence is also damaging to society as a whole. It can prevent women from engaging in productive employment, and girls from attending school. It makes women more vulnerable to forced and unprotected sex, which plays a key role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. It takes a deep and enduring toll on the entire family, including and especially the next generation. That is why this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, starting today, will be used by Governments, United Nations entities and civil society activists to focus on the detrimental consequences of violence against women on the well-being of the world as a whole.

At the World Summit in September, leaders pledged to redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and the girl child. We know that this requires us to change the mindset, still all too common and deep-seated, that violence against women is acceptable. That means leadership in showing, by example, that when it comes to violence against women and girls, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses. On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us rededicate ourselves to that mission.

(New York, 25 November, 2005 - Secretary-General's Message)

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

"At the World Summit in September, leaders pledged to redouble efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and the girl child. We know that this requires us to change the mindset, still all too common and deep-seated, that violence against women is acceptable. ... On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us rededicate ourselves to that mission."

UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer:

"Violence against women is the most pervasive violation of human rights, occurring every day, in every country and every region, regardless of income or level of development. ... On 25 November, the International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women, people around the world are coming together to condemn this universal crime against women."

Mehriban Zeinalova,
Azerbaijan

common mistakes

WE SHOULD REMEMBER THIS

in order to make the civil sector's work more effective

- The proposals we introduce are oftentimes separated; even in the case there are analogous proposals made by different organizations, they work separately instead of being united for cooperation;
- This can be referred to women MPs, who hold their political campaigns separately from each other, without cooperation with women's organizations;
- Women MPs tend to distance themselves from 'women's' problems; they do not introduce these problems as urgent issues for public discussions, they do not work at promoting women's rights;
- Due to the lack of solidarity, it becomes impossible to implement made proposals;
- Unlike men, women leaders are likely to underestimate the role of cooperation with mass-media;
- Women leaders are oftentimes unable to form their image, do not seriously work at their popularity;
- Women leaders undervalue their abilities, set minimal goals, they are not ambitious enough, which is the reason for minor success.

a remark
WE HAVE
WHAT
WE DESERVE

We had parliamentary elections recently. Originally, there were more than 2000 candidates registered. Only 212 out of the total number were women. But many of them had withdrawn their candidacies, as failed to sustain aggression and illegal actions. We held a poll, asking 500 women about their attitude towards women-candidates. It appeared, that the majority of women (67 %) does not trust them and is not going to vote for them at all. They explained this attitude as saying that women politicians are not interested in problems of female electorate. Researches show that women-leaders of Azerbaijan try to take part in solving serious problems, and thus actively participate in the formation of civil society. But at the same time they have very serious defects. One of the most important disadvantages is that they are not solidary with each other. In their work they do not touch local and practical problems, and are focused on global issues. This could be a reason for the society's mistrust towards women's initiatives.

Vefa Salekh,
Baku



photo by Galina Petriashvili, Georgia

Polina MILORADOVICH,
Georgia

portraits of the sector

CHOOSE YOURSELF

Regardless of the opinion about the non-governmental sector, there is an obvious fact: the third sector raised dozens of real leaders. Women leaders in particular

I shall not begin to approve, that all of them "have made themselves". Someone was helped by her husband, some others were supported by their brothers. Anyway, it is a question of an initial push only. For many of these women, the main reason for development was a personal problem: a disabled child, a loss or heavy wound of her husband, or some other very personal problems. The first shock of these leaders-to-be was followed by understanding that she was not the only one, who appeared in the situation of family drama. After this understanding there would appear the wish to unite with others. This is how the unions

of disabled children's parents, widows, single-mothers and other appeared.

There are many organizations, that were created following another impulse: a professional one, or under the wish to study some particular problems. It is natural, that many women's NGOs work at gender problems and fight for the rights of women. We have the entire Coalition of women's nongovernmental organizations that unites alike NGOs; it has been working for 5 years already, and today it incorporates over 80 NGOs.

Among women there are those who were executives during Soviet period as well. I asked them when was it easier to be a leader - nowadays or then? And I understand, than it is now more difficult, as a woman is now in the 'open space' of life.

Here are several small portraits of women leaders.

Nino

Infinitely diverse in her impulses, in emotions, in her deep belief in the absolute necessity of women's emancipation in the Caucasus. Beloved wife and gentle mother. She is very smart and very busy woman. Nino never complains, just shares her problems friendly: "I always keep in mind millions of details and tasks. And the main thing for me is the child. I have constant feeling of being guilty, I do not spend much time with my daughter..." It could be easy to advice her: just quit working and take care of the kid, your husband does earn enough money. But it is very hard to quit what you love, what you are good at, what is the part of your life.

Nelly

Considering her age, Nelly could be Nino's mother. Neither she faces Nino's main problem, a small kid. By the way, Nelly was brought to the NGO leadership by her adult son. Some 10-12 years ago, he was working abroad, sending to Georgia humanitarian aid from western donors. While seeking an honest person to receive cargo in Georgia, he decided that he could fully rely on his mother only. This was how Nelly, who already thought of retirement, became an active worker again. Her activeness appeared to be the best medicine for an old age.

Nana

She works really a lot, managing to combine her efforts in different fields, including family and career. She works in the fields where NGO activists are not really welcome, such as in trafficking for example. Nana launched her leadership activities earlier than others, back in 1989. Then, there was not even the definition 'non-governmental organization.' In December of 1989, when happened the earthquake in Armenia, she came to the Red Cross office and asked: "How can I help you?" This is how her leadership started.

Ia

Successful doctor, professor. When the department she worked at was closed down, her colleagues proposed: let's start something new. They created International Women Doctor's Fund. Today the fund's name is Women's Center; besides other, it is actively involved in medical education and awareness.

Manana

She worked at a plant and did not even think about her ability to be a good leader. Suddenly, after the war in Abkhazia started, the life had changed; her husband was seriously wounded and became disabled. It was necessary to survive somehow, and Manana united together with other women, who appeared in alike situation. They worked together, until Manana found her own direction of work and began working independently.



photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

Alma BEKTURGANOVA-ANDERSEN,
Denmark

when NGO and the state are partners

TO REACH EVERY IMMIGRANT WOMAN this is what women's organizations try to do

Two fates, two stories but the same problem. State structures of Denmark render to the women's non-governmental organizations serious financial assistance, which is directed to help women like these two

My dark-skinned friend Elizabeth from Ethiopia does not trust her husband anymore. Taking her away from her country, her husband promised to the her relatives that she wouldn't have any problems and would get higher degree in Denmark. Two years passed. To learn Danish better, Elizabeth got a job at the daycare, where she is the teacher's assistant. At home, she has other duties: she cleans the house, cooks and takes care of her baby. Once every two weeks she is also obliged to take care of the two kids of her husband. The husband refuses to help her at least somehow even once a week. She spends her salary buying clothes for herself and her daughter and doing grocery shopping. At the end of each month she has to ask for money from her husband. Which he doesn't like. He keeps saying that he spends a lot of money covering bank credit, child support charge and house fees. Elizabeth knows nothing about these expenditures. Back at home, she would know what to do and how to deal with the situation.

Another friend of mine is Inga from Latvia. She faces other kind of problems. Five years ago she escaped from her husband along with her three-years-old daughter. She is a beautiful woman, and this used to cause problems to her. Her husband used to beat her and her little daughter, when being jealous. Today, Inga has a common law marriage with a good guy, who understands her and helps her. But they can not get married officially, as he has no permanent residence in Denmark; neither Inga with her daughter have documents for being able to register the marriage. To get needed papers in Denmark, it is necessary to have a written permit from the biological father. But Inga's biggest fear is that her ex-husband finds out where she lives, after he is freed from jail. As a result, Inga's eight-years-old daughter can not go to school, despite she speaks English well.

Civil society does exist in every society, including a real autocratic one. But depending on the level of democratic development in the country, the representatives of civil sector either act together with state bodies, or work to contradict their destructive influence. In the countries with developed democracy, the state is more likely to ask for assistance from the civil organizations, especially in those delicate fields where it could spoil the situation by its standard administration measures. In Denmark, such a field is the problem of immigrants' integration. The country has a special ministry on

refugees and integration; the country has adopted number of state measures, such as free-of-charge three-year classes of Danish, financial aid to the refugees, state subsidy to employees hiring immigrants, consultation service in communities, etc. Nevertheless, the state passed on a wide range of activities to the non-governmental field. NGOs do those tasks that are sometimes hard to be implemented by the state. NGO activists work at finding individual approaches, which differs in regard of the ethnic or religion factors. Neither Inga nor Elizabeth addressed to the consultant within their communities, but they appealed to women's organizations.

Inga's situation turned out to be very simple. She was explained that any child in Denmark has a right for education, regardless of the papers the child has or does not have. Her daughter now studies in the first grade, while mother only regrets that she did not ask for a help previously. As for Elizabeth, she needs a consultation of an experienced lawyer and psychologist. The situation in her family is quite standard: when a husband simply does not want her wife to be a devel-



photo by Hanne Lise Thomsen, Denmark

oped personality. Elizabeth's husband is actually more in need of professional help, than his wife. One of the largest organizations that help foreigners, is the Danish Refugee Aid. One of its departments, the Volunteer's House, is open four times a week to receive any person who needs assistance. Here an immigrant can study Danish, here specialists will help you to prepare every papers necessary for being employed. The House also organizes cultural activities, such as visiting museums, etc.



photo by Hanne Lise Thomsen, Denmark

Another women's organization, KVINFO (women's forum) has a very good project helping women immigrants to find a mentor in Denmark. Mentor is the person who helps you to integrate in Danish society, a mentor and a foreigner have a lot in common, oftentimes they have analogous education and profession. The Danish partner helps an immigrant woman not only theoretically, but also on practice.

Besides this, KVINFO conducts permanent meetings and seminars for women participants of the network, which helps to establish various ties and connections. There are also a lot of other projects, I was recently told about cafe Muhabet. This is a cafe for disabled foreigners. They come to the cafe to have a chat or to share problems and propose possible solutions.

It seems to me that women's movement in Scandinavian countries has changed and now has a new shape. If in 1960-1970, there was necessity to hold large-scaled actions and to attract the society's attention to the problems, presently the activists of women's NGOs work at reaching every single person who needs help.

Roza KUKHALASHVILI,
Georgia

pain

WOMEN REFUGEES ARE NOT THE SUBJECT OF CHARITY,

they are an independent power and the powerful resource for development

There are a lot of internally displaced persons in Georgia, they are from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Despite of the severe trials they had to go through, they did not become desperate, but even achieved some new success. For many, tragic experience of war turned out to be a new stage of the personality development.

My organization is called Women's Council of Abkhazia. Some people ask, what is the logic of the Abkhazian council being based in Tbilisi. Usually, I answer that we formed the organization long time ago, back in Sukhumi, we worked before the war, during the war and after the war. Actually, the organization had to refuge along with us, its founders.

We work a lot with refugees, with women and children. We help orphan kids, large families, families without a bread-winner, single old women. This is a humanitarian aid, received from different sources, such as Norwegian Women's Council, Georgian Women's Council, local business figures.

The second and a very important direction of our work is the activity on conflict resolution. We use the public diplomacy tools, participate in different conferences aimed at working out of peaceful solution.

The third direction, which is also very important, is reflected in the efforts on women IDPs' employment. We collect information job vacancies, invite women to trainings on small business development. Oftentimes we work together with other non-governmental organizations. It is common for us that some people come to our office and shares a problem, we do our best to help the person,

sometimes on the personal level only.

When thinking back about the history of our organization, I see that we through very difficult problems. We went through the huge pain, through desperation, depression. What was it that made us strong? First few months after the catastrophe were so hard that it is impossible to recall them. I spent these two months in Batumi; without any money, without an occupation, with free dinners we were offered... The word "refugee" used to burn us from the inside, it remains to be a stain today as well. I survived when got a job. I moved to Tbilisi and began working, meeting friends and colleagues, that was a good rehabilitation. But when I was told that it is necessary to help others, I used to answer: "How can I help others, I need help myself!" Later I realized, that there is always someone, who feels worse than you do. And if you help that person, you will be feeling better yourself.

When I think of my colleagues, those who have to live not in the place, where he believes, I see that many of us managed to be successful in this new life. Some of them started their own business, others successfully work in the non-governmental sector. But there are still a lot of people who continue suffering. This is not the problem of a person's personal qualities, it is neither all about luck; it is also tightly connected to the level of internal psychological wounds.

In the non-governmental sector, there are many of those whom we call refugees. It means that this field is the most accessible because of its democracy.

Tamara HOVNATANYAN,
Armenia

research

NGOs WOMEN'S SOCIAL ACTIVENESS: 'plus' and 'minus' signs

WHAT DO WE WORK AT?

4 main directions of women's NGOs' work can be determined:

social-political problems and women's rights protection,
promoting women's professional and business active-
ness,
introducing social services and charity,
fight for elimination of violence against women.

This division is very relative; more exact information can be obtained when listing the forms of women NGOs work:

education,
informational, medical, psychological and legal con-
sultations,
raising the level of professional skills and career-guid-
ance,
humanitarian aid distribution,
medical treatment, prophylaxis,
mediation,
conduction of researches,
small libraries,
organization of out-work,
providing services,
lobbying,
public forms of work (organization of conferences,
seminars, round tables, discussions, mass actions,
piquets)

Researches prove that women's organizations are the most active part of the Armenian social sector. This is also proved by the data of several polls conducted by the national Association of Women with University Education. As the most active and effectively operating organizations respondents indicated charity organizations, while women's organizations occupy the second position in the list. This is the evidence of women's organizations' popularity in the society.

According to the Ministry of Justice, since 1991, there were over 3200 social organizations registered in

WHOM WE WORK FOR?

beneficiaries of women's organizations

According to the research held by the Training-Information Center of civil organizations in 1999, beneficiaries of Armenian women's organizations are the following groups:

village women residents - 60%
intellectual women - 47%
unemployed women and large family mothers - 35%
housewives and single mothers - 17.6% each
disabled women and women suffered from natural disasters - 5.8% each%

Armenia; some 700 out of the total number are actively operating presently. Approximately 60 of them are women's organizations, 30% of them operate in the country's regions. Thus, the wide spread argument regarding high number of women's NGOs is not truth. Especially considering the fact that 53% of total population of Armenia are women.

Women's organizations of Armenia have not become the power which would have significant influence on the social processes. According to the evaluation of women NGOs' leaders, the level of their influence on the current political events and reforms is minimal. Part of women's NGOs avoids to set political problems. There is an opinion that social organizations must be outside of the political problems, this is why number of women's NGOs are involved only in char-

SELF-CRITICISM

According to the research held by the Training-Information Center of civil organizations, 76% of questioned women's NGOs evaluated the sector's work as unsatisfactory, providing the following arguments:

The biggest part of organizations does not work at solving urgent problems and spends thousands of dollars for fashionable slogans - 35%

The field is too young - 35%

There is no dialogue between NGOs and the government - 23,5%

Personal ambitions and unhealthy psychological atmosphere within the sector hampers joint actions - 41%

ity and education field and are not working at political issues anyhow. According to the polls, the society expects from women's organizations solution of social problems, such as access to medical help and other.

At the same time, the society began realizing that the women's problems' are, actually, the problems of the entire society. The society is presently very likely to come to the conclusion that without women's participation, it is impossible to build democratic civil society. Presently, for the development of the Armenian NGO sector, it is necessary to have a determined strategy, that would promote consolidation of women's organization.

(written on the results of Gender Situation in Armenia research)

Rano Bobojanova,
Tajikistan

ten years after Beijing

UPSTAIRS ON THE ESCALATOR GOING DOWN

how to act so that gender issues do not turn into fashion only?

Sometime ago, I heard an interesting story about our president who visited the country's regions. He went to the Southern province, where one of the local resident, a woman commented his meeting quietly: "Why does he greet only men? We also want to talk to the president." But she was heard, and the president came up to the group of women. He asked her: "how is your life here?" The women answered: "Thanks God, we are doing fine, the worst is already behind."

As I was told, women were just happy because of this short chat with the president. I would be happy to see alike dialogue, broadcasted on the TV; central TV channel is usually very detailed when covering presidential visits; but the scheme is always the same: officials and heads of local administrations are all together in the front, behind them, there are prettily dressed girls in national dresses, holding flowers. They meet the president at the airport. The girls read poems; and then there is a working meeting with images of men only.

Women's issues are not only about the number of women among officials, however this is very important. The main thing is that the society should evaluate them equally with men. Recently, the interest towards women increased significantly. All our newspapers, that are published in Russian, have plenty of articles, dedicated to Ukrainian ex-vice prime minister Yulia Timoshenko. Is it a vivid interest, or just that men's sarcasm regarding a woman in politics? The article, entitled "Tajiks work at the MP's summer house, where porno film is being shot" is about Yulia Timoshenko. The article was printed by Vechernyaya Gazeta on September 16; it was illustrated by the photo of naked Timoshenko. Digest Press newspaper published a story about the rating of 100 most popular women of the world. Condoleeza Rice topped the list; the newspaper dubbed her as the "black panther." The author of the story claimed that there were none of Russian and Tajik women in the list.

As for the Tajik women, four of them: Bikhochal Rakhimova, Viloyat Mirzoeva, Gavkhar Churaeva, and Fatima Akhmedova have recently become Nobel Prize nominees. But this fact was not reflected by the local media anyhow. This is very understandable - women's issues, women's contribution to peace are not covered by the Tajik media.

For example, in 1995, the World Women's Conference was held in Beijing, which was a very significant event for the entire world. 10 years passed; during this term the attitude towards women's role and gender quality changed significantly. 10 years is a significant jubilee itself; but what sort of articles appeared in the newspapers? We did the review of both official and independent media. There was nothing except for three news briefs! Tajikistan was presented in Beijing by 5 women: Bozgul Dodkhudoeva, Gulchakhon Bobosodikova, Malokhat Shakhobova, Firuza Tursunzoda and Shoiria Shamsieva.

Ten years passed and we convened a news conference dedicated to this date. We asked ourselves about what has been done since then? There were presidential decrees adopted: On Measures to Improve Women's Status in the Society, and the law On State Guarantees for Insuring Equal Opportunities and Rights for Men and Women. The

number of women's NGOs was also increased since then: from 3 in 1995 to 700 today. The number of women within state bodies has also increased, even the percentage of women MPs grew from 3 % in 1994 to 17 % presently. One of the participants of the news conference, former MP and ex-minister of labor and social protection Rafika Musoeva stated directly: "There was a lot of work done to implement Beijing Platform of Action, but we failed to learn how to present our work in an adequate manner." There were only two woman journalists who came to the news conference we organized!

Thus there remains a very urgent question: what is necessary to do so that the interest towards gender problems is not only a fashion, but turns into the field which is seriously considered by the society? Presently, the efforts of our activists remind me running on the escalator, which goes down...



The magazine title reads: "I want to be happy"
photo by Umida Akhmedova, Uzbekistan

Maria OSIPOVA,
Belarus/Russia

civil values and mass-media

THE FUTURE WITHOUT TERRORISM - TERRORISM WITHOUT THE FUTURE

when informing, do journalists involuntarily become accomplices of terrorists?

As we already informed in the previous issue, the Antiterrorist forum of journalists took place in the beginning of October in Moscow "The Future without terrorism, terrorism without the future", organized by the Institute of development of press. The majority of participants have, to some extent, stated a number of claims to the representatives of mass-media. There, it was said about the absence of control over their activities, their inclination to sensations which is, at times, very close to provocations, voluntary or involuntary popularization of violence.

The editor-in-chief of the Russian magazine "Message" Dmitry Petrov reminded, that when the journalist writes something, and the editor-in-chief puts something in the issue, they always should understand, that this something in a certain way can change a configuration of forces. Speaking about the purposes of terrorists, Dmitry has cited as the most convincing example, in my opinion:
- The goal of the act of terrorism on Dubrovka was not only the suffered or the Russian authorities, but also all Russian society. And it really became. The horror has spread all over the country. The same purpose pursued the explosions of the houses in Budyonovsk and the capture of hostages in Beslan. Let alone that horror which has seized all the world when the planes crashed into the towers in New York. I at this moment was in large investment bank and observed of the brokers. In the moment when they began showing the impact of the plane on a tower, the brokers have simply gone mad: "What will be with the market?" So, here is another, one more purpose - world economy. This list of the purposes can be continued...

In end of the Forum there was a videobridge between Beslan and Moscow. During the dialogue a very curious opinion was expressed that the international terrorism should be regarded as a huge transnational corporation with its own management, intelligence service, counter-intelligence, psychologists, customers, executors. In this connection two questions were put:

- if to consider terrorism as business - whether mass-media are the conductors and public relations people in this process?
- isn't that therefore journalists aspire to show the monstrous sides of the terrorist acts, because violence and death are enormous sales?

But for electronic mass-media, - was noted in Beslan - then, for example, there would be no trace of Basayev as a political unit. There would be no trace of him if the tragical Budyonovsk would not have been broadcast on all channels and the monstrous delirium of terrorists would not have been sounded. On making a hero of Basayev, many journalists made their careers. However, some of them have paid too high price for it, later on. With all difference in estimations, one thing is obvious: in the journalists' shop the time has come to analyze the mistakes. It is necessary to work out some definite ethics in order that the corporate interests of mass-media and individual professionals didn't come into conflict with the interests of the society.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE FORUM FOR "CaucAsia":

Aslambek ASLAKHANOV,
the Adviser of the President of the Russian Federation on North-Caucasian region:

- I would not accuse journalists of their wrong or incorrect interpretation of acts of terrorism because, for example, nobody has plainly explained to them the meaning of the "shahid", none has designated a degree of harm which they can cause with their statements.

If to speak about the situation as a whole, it is the consequence of inactivity of the Russian authorities in their struggle against terrorism. The President of Russia repeatedly spoke about the neces-

sity of creating single common database on terrorists but nothing has been done. No matter how many correct words were said about terrorism at all levels and in all countries, all the same, it will continue until we base our struggle on physical destruction of opponents. Because doing so, we only generate new waves of terrorists - in the place of the annihilated would come new which are ready to revenge. The main task today is education of new generations literally from infancy. While the population of our plane, aware, do not tear away the fact of the decision of all problems at the cost of human life - everything will continue. And the role of the journalists in this job cannot be overestimated.

Irina KHAKAMADA,
the leader of the Russian party "Our choice ":

- I am convinced that politicians use struggle against terrorism to press democratic freedoms. And that is why the discussions about necessity of struggle against terrorism, including what to publish in mass-media and what not, are earnestly imposed. We, since morning, have been discussing, what danger is born by journalists if they disclose the plan of antiterrorist operation. It is a nightmare! Actually, behind all it, hypocrisy and lie are hidden. In general, though once has there ever been a normal plan? Nobody can answer: who was responsible, what plan was there, why it failed? Why in the result of the terrorist act were there so many victims, why do scared and bought by the state mass media at the beginning of the terrorist act give some number of victims, tell stories within the framework of ideology, ordered for untwisting some myth for struggling against international terrorism,- and then turn up other figures?

The question, in fact, is more serious. The question is not about mass-media, the question is on the morals, about the transparency of the authorities, about their being under control of the society. Only when this main question is solved, mass media will work out their own ethics and will be able to solve what they can and they cannot. Otherwise, you may forbid everything and do it not because mass media contact with terrorists but because the Kremlin doesn't like it. By the way, in the developed countries it is the same. What did they do there? Nobody did anything! Terrorist acts continue.

Edward LOZANSKY,
President of the American University in Moscow:

- I would like to pay attention to the double standards in illumination of struggle with terrorism. We often hear statements of the Russian management, the public, press about that the policy of double standards is applied to Russia. Often these complaints are justified. It is caused by many reasons, but I would lay the blame for one of them on Russia which resists insufficiently to it, does not represent its point of view in the mass-media of the USA and Europe. I, attentively every morning, look through press: what different newspapers write about Russia? There is a lot of negative information, up to 95 %.

The western press, whatever is said about it, always tries to give different points of view. It is done, first of all, for the image to show its non-engagement of the newspapers. Many editors of influential American newspapers are ready to print materials of journalists from Russia. They often address me with a question, whether I know somebody who could get into, for example, dispute with such irreconcilable opponent of Russia as Bzhezinsky. The editor of the newspaper is ready to place the article of the opponent next, but such articles are not available. And in this sense the practice of double standards is easily eliminated exactly by journalistic efforts.

Natalya Domagalskaya,
Kyrgyzstan

active position

"THAT'S ENOUGH!" WOMEN DECIDED and formed their own matriarchate in their village

Only a few years ago, women of Bokonbaevo village of Kyrgyzstan were thinking only about how to feed their families. In the circumstances of total unemployment, it was a major question for them. But women, as it is known, are very optimistic and they work a lot, especially when they have small children. The solution was found quite quickly.

Basically every Kyrgyz girl is taught traditional handicraft, including working with felt. Grown up, each of them can make sleepers, children's clothes or a carpet. Quite unexpectedly for many, it turned out that handicraft is well sold to foreign tourists, and that the popular art could bring some profit. Village women united into a Felt-Art Studio and ventured to start their own business.

However, many of them had to develop their skills before selling the product. Others found out that a consumer has slightly different preferences when buying it: natural colors are more preferred than those considered as the best since childhood - bright

green and red. The variety of souvenirs was also necessary to widen - besides usual toys and sleepers, the women started selling mobile phone envelopes, makeup bags and hats.

This business became possible with the support of Eurasia Foundation and the funds of USAID. There were also seminars on business and economics, computers, that enabled to distribute advertisement of the product world-wide.

The most successful women now make some \$ 100 per month, this is quite a salary in the village. But even girls, who come from school to help their mothers earn their own pocket money. Only fathers remain without business; in the summer they do works in the garden, but in winter the majority of them just gets drunk...

This is how the women of Felt-Art Studio made their decision: "That's enough!" they said. They went to neighboring Uzbekistan and brought samples of national wooden articles - boxes, book-shelves, chess. They also brought a machine to make the articles, to get their husband used to handicraft.



photo by Igor Sapozhnikov, Kyrgyzstan

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