HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEE MOVEMENTS IN THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Russia: Only Two Alternatives?

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On June 22, 1998, the anniversary of the beginning of World War II, Russian President Boris Yeltsin made a radio announcement dedicating a day to the memory of the War. This special attention of the President to this anniversary was precipitated by the growing popularity of neo-Nazi ideas among the population, especially the youth. Teenagers, impressed by military symbols, try on the black uniforms. Appeals to impose strong discipline upon society are gaining popularity. Imposition of a dictatorial regime, for many, seems to be the best way out of the present situation. This rhetoric is often accompanied by fantasies about the revival of the old Russia, its national spirit along with the search for an "enemy" to be blamed for the recent crisis and punished accordingly.

The situation gives rise to a number of questions. Why are neo-Nazi ideas so popular in a country where millions of people were killed during World War II? Why are neo-Nazi ideas so popular in a country where the memory of relatives who died during the war is so fresh? Why are neo-Nazi ideas so popular in a country where for many years the ruling Communist party tried to demonstrate a huge difference between Soviet Communism and Nazi Fascism and to discredit the latter?

In the past, communist leaders told their populations that they must build socialism or else suffer from fascism, or foreign occupation and a slow decay, at the very least. Now, many new leaders—not to mention their supporters and opponents abroad—insist that all

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citizens must rapidly build democracies and a free market economy or face the return of the old regime or an equally horrible alternative.[1] Unfortunately, today, people in Russia, and in many newly independent states (newly independent former Soviet republics), are raising concerns that the second alternative is much more likely as the economies of their countries are in disarray.

"The economic reforms in Russia have suffered a crash,"—says one of Russia's important newspapers—*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*.[2] A pauperization of the population and the emergence of a class of multimillion dollar proprietors seem to be their only tangible results. Firstly, in opinion of the newspaper, such a situation creates an objective base for the return of the communists to power; secondly, it is a precondition for the rebirth of authoritarianism and even fascism. This new economic crisis in Russia and in some of the Newly Independent States has also created the atmosphere of apathy, anxiety, and mistrust among the ordinary people.

The autocratic ideas are extremely popular there, since too many citizens are not receiving their salary for even few months; crime is not only on the rise, but remains mostly undetected; and the gap between the richest and the poorest is immense. The most egregious violation of human rights are often overlooked by the people, who rather focus on similar violations elsewhere, which is a convincing evidence of retrograde social behaviour. And that pattern, in turn, leads to the situation many countries whose regimes are anything but democratic and free market oriented to seek certification and to avoid such criticism. For example, the victory of General A. Lebed in Krasnoyarsk showed that people could vote for anybody, even if his ideas and activities seem to be dictatorial.

Also, there is a revival of nationalism and racism. In 1998, a record number of crimes committed on racial grounds were registered in Moscow, writes a magazine *Kommersant*. On April 22 and 23, the employees of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow received a strong warning.

Non-white employees of the embassy were recommended to be careful while being outside the Embassy. Moscow racists have announced war against Blacks and the Asians. Anonymous research showed, that practically all of those who are not Europeans frequently face random displays of hostility, because of their ethnicity or race. One third of them has declared, that during last year, was subjected to rough insults or physical violence coming even from the ordinary citizens. Quite recently, Skinheads were involved in a series of attacks on foreigners of African and Asian origin, and beat a young Russian rabbi in a subway station in Moscow.[3]

Polish historian, Adam Michnik, editor in chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and a leading former Solidarity activist, who spent six years in prison for opposing communist regime, spoke about the recent developments in Russia at the opening of the Central European Arts Festival in London this year. According to him, chaos in Russia is the biggest threat to the security in Central Europe. Thus, it is essential for the outside world to encourage democracy in Russia. Michnik also suggested keeping a vigilant eye on Russian intentions—or as he put it, to "look closely at her hands."[4]

As it was implied before, the situation in many Newly Independent States is not better, and in some of them, even worse.

For exmple, President of Belarus, Mr. Lukashenko, is a former Soviet collective farm boss, who thinks in Stalin's era stereotypes and who was once the subject of criminal charges for beating a tractor driver with a stick. After a referendum that was criticized by foreign observers, he dismissed the elected parliament and set up his own puppet chamber of hand-picked deputies who routinely approve every measure he proposes. Almost every opposition leader has been arrested, jailed, and subjected to fines. Some have been savagely beaten. In Belarus the number of journalists that are being arrested, expelled, beaten or threatened is constantly growing. The independent press is subjected to systematic percecution by the authorities. Accord-

ing to the reports of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the local authorities are constructing a system of totalitarian government. In order to justify its policy, the dictatorial regime in Belorus is desperately looking for enemies, both external and internal. Of course, Western countries and Western culture are viewed as the external enemies, while opposition groups and minorities are regarded as the internal enemies.

Belarus is also the only European country whose citizens need permission to travel abroad. Here the state controls the economy; almost 1.5 percent of the population work for security services, which uses the same old name, KGB.

When *perestroika* began, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, unlike their neighbouring countries (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan), were looked upon as places of real democracy in Central Asia. But after few years of independence the picture has changed dramatically. And again, opposition leaders, journalists, and media are victims of growing authoritarian regimes, which does not tolerate any criticism.

If we add to this situation massive displacement of many peoples as well as growing number of refugees, the whole picture is very bleak.

Before 1917, some historians thought that Russia had only two alternatives: communism or fascism. The victory of communists, in their opinion, was the better solution in this situation. Are there really only two alternative for Russia and many of the former Soviet republics today as well?

It is hard not to agree with Adam Michnik who says that a democratic Russia does not threaten the world, and the democratic world does not threaten a democratic Russia. Thus, the free world should do its best to make Russia a member of the European democratic system as soon as possible. It means opening onto Russia and not causing anxiety among its population or closing Russia off. Russia is a country that can be like any other European state. Nonetheless, for the time being, we have to be very vigilant about events that take

place on its territory and in the Newly Independent States, and act accordingly, since the stakes are very high.

This issue of *Refuge* attempts to address some of these problems. The articles presented here were written by insiders, i.e. scholars and human rights activists living and working in the former Soviet republics. The reader has to keep in mind that doing research in that part of the world often involves a considerable personal risk. Also the access to reliable information is limited if not denied, while the official sources are hardly ever objective and usually represent the views of the local propaganda. Thus, the researchers frequently have to relay on "leaks" form the circles close to the decision-makers or on "what ordinary people think," and cannot reveal the identity of the informers. Therefore, some of the ideas and conclusions presented in this issue may seem to be founded on hearsay, anecdote and personal bias. But such information is often the only harbinger of important events, especially in the areas of socio-political turmoil.

Also the tone of the papers is very personal and emotional in character. But the reader has to keep in mind that the authors do not enjoy comfort of Western scholars and are writing about problems that are seriously affecting everyday lives and near future of their homelands and peoples. This emotional tone is also a valuable piece of information as it stresses the gravity of these problems. ■

Notes

1. Paul Goble, "East: Analysis from Washington—Avoiding the Apocalypse," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 22, 1998.

2. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 22, 1998.

3. Lev Krichevsky, "In Quest for Financial Bailout, Russia Addresses Extremism," *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, June 3, 1998, Moscow.

4. Benjamin Partridge, "The Biggest Threat," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 22, 1998. ◻

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Social Mood and Ethnic Tension: The Case of the Former USSR

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Abstract

The author analyzes the phenomenon of social mood and its impact on the intensification of ethnic tensions. According to him, the mobility and the variability of the social mood can be expressed through the display of its intensity, which is especially pronounced in the deepest shifts occurring in the bosom of ethnic self-consciousness during the times of social turmoil. The article makes it evident that many international and interethnic tragedies could be avoided, if the authorities reacted to the fluctuations of social mood of the people on time. The sociological studies of ethnic conflicts and tensions on the territory of the former USSR after its disintegration serve as an illustration material for his theory.

Précis

L'auteur analyse le phénomène de la morosité sociale et son impact sur l'intensification des tensions ethniques. Selon lui, la mobilité et la variabilité de la morosité sociale tend à s'exprimer par la manifestation de son intensité, laquelle est particulièrement prononcée lors des mouvements abrupts et profonds qui se produisent au sein de la conscience de soi ethnique dans les phases de troubles sociaux. L'article montre clairement que de nombreuses tragédies internationales et inter-ethniques pourraient être évitées si les autorités savaient réagir adéquatement et au bon moment à la fluctuation de la morosité sociale. L'étude sociologique des conflits et tensions ethniques sur le territoire de l'ex-URSS après sa désintégration sert d'illustration matérielle de la théorie de l'auteur.

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Introduction

The mobility and the variability of the social mood can be expressed through the display of its intensity: strong, moderate, and weak. This display can be very evident and rough, when it springs out of the deepest emotions and indispensable and immediate aspirations of the people to realize in their acts the highest goal—strong conviction in the correctness of a given frame of mind or restrained and broken values that are allowed to resurface. In its other extreme, the social mood can practically not display itself, being completely identified with the existing public consciousness, in which there are not enough dominant trends and orientations that could induce any form of active expression. Such passivity of the people allows their mood to be characterized as weak in intensity.

Stages of Ripening of the Intensity of the Social Mood

The various degrees of intensity of social mood are especially visible in the deepest shifts occurring in the bosom of national self-consciousness during the times of radical social changes. This phenomenon can be characterized by a complex scale of the most diverse feelings and frames of mind—from the delight accompanying the resurgence of national identity on the first plane, to the disappointment and apathy, when the expected positive shifts did not occur.

In the past, the existence of the USSR instilled trust in the souls of many millions of people and kept their social mood at a constant, stable level. There was the sense of patriotism in their relation to the country. In such conditions, people were proud in their country for its power and leadership. At the same time, the ethnosocial development in the USSR was rather murky. The attempts of the authorities to hide the con-tradictions that were arising again (though they had new basis) eventually led to the powerful outbreak of the national self-consciousness which contributed to the destabilization and the collapse of the USSR.

However, since World War II, the struggle of the main ethnic groups for dominance in their republics commenced and increased, and sometimes led to hidden discrimination against the representatives of other nations. Such social processes contributed to latent destructive action against the unity of the whole country. Thus, the migration processes, mainly the outflow of Russian population from the republics, began as early as at the end of the 1970s, when, for the first time, statistical information revealed this trend, which started in Georgia.[1] However, despite this situation, nobody became interested in the social status and social mood of the people and even bothered asking questions, why Russians leave this God-blessed, rich, fertile and seemingly hospitable territory? Seeds of mistrust were planted in the minds of the people who displayed distrust for each other as well as suspicions and doubt of the officially proclaimed values.

The hopes of the representatives of various nations at the first stage of perestroika were directed towards the revival of national cultures—their customs, tradition, and the renewal of interest in the native languages. According to an all-Soviet research of historical consciousness, conducted in 1990 and directed by Dr. V. I. Merkushin, the aspiration to learn the historical roots of the country and its people was expressed by 28 percent of the respondents of this study. It placed only behind the aspirations to know the truth about the past (41%) and the desire to expand one's views and outlooks (30%). About the same number of people (27%) said, that they are interested in the "life, customs, traditions of the peoples, and their oral

national creativity."[2] The social mood in this period could be characterized as joyfully anticipating, active, and constructive.

To a certain extent, the results of this research summed up the first stage in the development and the renewal of the national self-consciousness in the USSR. The respect for the native languages and the ethnic cultures, that gained momentum during the period of perestroika, contributed to the enrichment of the national identity. Practically all people of the former USSR displayed a deep interest in their ancestors, their customs and language, since they were allowed to do so. Consequently, the social mood became more optimistic. It was accompanied by the expectations of a considerable improvement of the well-being of the people in the near future. The social mood received an increasingly ethnosocial colouring, though its intensity had unilateral, emotional, impulsive character.

Then, the process of reorganization of the whole country linked the social mood of the people to high expectations of gaining the economic sovereignty and even the formation of national states. Many politicians of nationalistic viewpoints in Soviet republics thought that it was just enough to be liberated from the Soviet dictatorship in order to bless their populations with a life better, than the one they experienced within the framework of the USSR with its dictatorial form of government.

There was also another, higher level of fire in the nationalistic ambitions, at least among the intellectuals, who passionately preached ideas of national economic sovereignty. The rigid centralization so characteristic for the USSR that limited the rights and opportunities of the republics was fairly rejected. Thus, the local propaganda stressed that each of the republics could be much better off as an independent state. There were the numerous articles in all allied republics, which tried to prove that each republic was using much less than it produced. Where did the surplus go? However not stated openly, it was assumed that the surplus went to Russia. Moreover, the calcula-

tions were done using the existing prices of that time in the USSR (instead of the world prices).

In addition, at the same time, people mulled over the idea whether "centre of the empire" was exploiting and abusing them. Gradually the Russian population was viewed as the representatives of the "centre of the empire." The ideas of national economic sovereignty, present mainly in theories and accounts of intellectuals, entered the minds and penetrated deep into the consciousness of the masses. At first, these ideas pronounced themselves in the public desire to set down economic borders not only between republics, but also between the their inhabitants based on nationality. It can seem surprising, but social expectations and social hopes only strengthened the presentiment of economic well-being and material prosperity. In these conditions, the social mood was still far more constructive than destructive. The mood was elevated, joyfully patient, positive and healthy emotionally. However, exactly during this period, the mood of the people, social groups, and even nationalities began to absorb negative features of consciousness and behaviour, such as suspicion towards other ethnic groups, feeling of deprivation, and strong beliefs in the superiority of one nation and republic in the level of economic development and opportunities for achieving higher standard of living—if only they could work independently.

But the intensity of social mood reached its apogee during the radical transformations in the political sphere in the republics, i.e. the receiving of a political independence, which in the end resulted in the break-up of the USSR and the formation of the new states. The brakes on raging nationalism and political ambitions were finally removed. National affairs have moved to the third stage—a stage of building sovereignty. The logic of leaders of nationalistic orientation at that time was very transparent—national, cultural and economic questions could be fruitfully addressed only after the victory of their political platform. The public con-

sciousness in these conditions became an object of active manipulation, and the social mood was associated with national and ethnic interests only.

In 1991, for example, the official authorities of the Ukraine jumped to the conclusion that people voted for the break-up of Russia, for burial of the Unitarian state, after the overwhelming majority of the population positively answered to a question given in the autumn 1991: "Do you want to live in a free and democratic country?" What was the basis for such conclusion and the relevance to the opinion of the people of Ukraine, who in the spring that year supported the idea of preservation of the USSR? After all, who does not want to live in a free and democratic country? Thus, how such questions and answers should be interpreted becomes a critical issue, especially during great social upheavals.

Such tricky and misleading referenda, as well as conclusions drawn from them, formed the ground not only for the nationalistic ambitions of the local political leaders, but also provoked a part of the population to display the worst human qualities—open prejudice towards other ethnic groups. These conditions implanted in the minds of the population the idea of revisiting historical claims, debts, and insults (apparent and imagined) that were often not only a century, but also a thousand years old. This simultaneous, "teleological" and spontaneous disruption of the former structure of the relations between various ethnic groups resulted in the growth of social and socio-psychological discomfort among the people.

The people became also more disturbed by the rising international conflicts. Even in ethnically homogenous regions, there might be a very high level of anxiety. Experts have named 36 (some up to 150) areas in Russia (and outside Russia), in which the international conflicts are close to erupting. Economic, and more often political, claims are often kept in disguise hidden behind legitimate national aspirations and the debates on national culture, sovereignty and language. National interests

often serve as the screen for political claims and ambitions, lust for power and authority and special privileges.

Many international tragedies could be avoided, if authorities had reacted to mass social mood in a timely fashion. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, in the Kazakhstan republic, the idea of the creation of an independent area for Germans, who were violently deported in 1940s from the Volga region, became an issue. However, this idea was not supported by the official authorities of Kazakhstan. Consequently, the republic has lost (and continues to lose due to emigration) tens of thousands of efficient, disciplined professionals. A barrier of political alienation between Germans and Kazakhs has been created and has caused instability in industrial spheres. The data of the State Committee of republic says that "nonnative" population makes up 76 percent of those employed in the industrial sector. This percentage is even higher in coal mining.[3]

Analyzing the condition of the mood in connection with interethnic and national mutual relations, one is compelled to draw a disappointing conclusion. As for at the moment, the international level of intensity remains high in the former republics of USSR. Answers given by approximately half of the questioned representatives of various groups testify to the tense relations between the peoples of the former USSR, and one quarter of them even allows for an opportunity of occurrence of the conflicts on the national level.[4]

Levels of Intensity

Empirical research and analysis of the conflicts show that there are three levels of intensity in interethnic relations that affect a degree of intensity of social mood of specific ethnic groups, nations.

The first one, ethnic limitations (i.e., unwillingness to have contacts with those who do not subscribe to one's national or ethnic ethos), is the most common. It exhibits itself in increasing support for mono-ethic families (there is the reduction in the number of mixed marriages), in preference to work in "mono-national" collectives, and in the

monopolization of the establishment of all levels by the representatives of one ethnic group.[5]

Practically all of the peoples, especially those who in ethnic states or ethnic and territorial autonomy, suffer from this illness, which is often a starting point for the formation of selfish national mood, and consequently the destruction of international consent. During the initial stage of creation of nationalistic and chauvinist views and intentions, the social mood as a whole is peaceful and favourable towards the others, and it does not provide the framework for individual negative episodes of ethnic conflict, which at this stage do not are not given a special meaning. A more complex situation has arisen during the birth of the new independent states in the territory of the former USSR, after new structures of official and informal mutual relations of the people of various ethnicity started to form. Russians have suffered the most in this new political reality. In the majority of the newly independent states, they have become an ethnic minority, discriminated against by various far-fetched restrictions and regulations.

The second level of interethnic tension is ethnic selfishness (keeping the privileges by one ethnic group at the expense of the others). It is a step not only towards creating tensions in the relationships between people, but also towards a high degree of intensity of the social mood of the people of different ethnic backgrounds.

As sociological surveys show, that up to 30–40 percent of the native people of the republics consider as natural having more privileges than other ethnic groups living there. However, the employment of Russians is still greater in industry and, partly, in science, public health services, and education. At the same time, in all other spheres and branches of the state and economy, the percent of Russians is lower than the percent of the dominant groups. In Baltic states, for example, de facto there are even strong restrictions on the usage of natural resources on the basis of ethnic background. Shares are withheld from

Russian shareholders and provided only to the native people.[6]

In Dagestan, ethnic selfishness is displayed in tensions between Laks and Koumics over of the Koumics' land, while, Nogais want a unification of all the Nogai territories, divided some time ago between Dagestan, Stavropol Territory, and Chechnya.[7]

In these conditions the social mood becomes infected with the virus of suspicion and mistrust; expectation of negative consequences and lose of stability are on the rise. Thus, under certain circumstances, social tensions on an interpersonal level as well as on a mass scale may erupt.

Ethnic selfishness can pass into a third a stage—ethnophobia, characterized by a direct and irreconcilable hostility towards to others. The violent displays of ethnophobia could be observed in Armenian-Azeri, Georgian-Abchazian conflicts, and also in Osetin-Ingush conflict, when even on an interpersonal level the hate, lack of tolerance, and accusation of each other continue up to day. Also separate regions that belong to Cossacks and those in Northern Caucasus are on the verge of open conflicts between various social and ethnic groups.

The explosive power of this phenomenon lays in a sphere of emotions subjected to ill-conceived suggestions and ideology. Domestic chauvinism—a phenomenon the function of which is to mobilize irrational emotions, is the powerful source of irritation, indignation, and hate. The existing prejudices and biases can serve as a strong motive for not only amoral, but also illegal, and deliberate actions against people who do not share common ethos.

In any society there are followers of ethos, which is the subject or object of aggressive nationalism, and even chauvinism, or both. In addition, domestic chauvinism appeals to and is strengthen by the national pride, ill-defined sense of honour, presence of deformed judgements, false estimations, and false facts in people's consciousness. The phenomenon of domestic chauvinism as the category of real mood and social action does not

have any organic universal properties inherent to it, neither certain psychological or physiological type with a special set of peculiarities, which would differ from all other people. The carrier of the phenomenon of aggressive nationalism and chauvinism can be persons from any social layer, independent of their profession, social status and intelligence. The infinite number of variations possible circumstances and events that can provoke this kind of attitude and behaviour do not leave much room for hope that some types of people or social groups are safe from a "backfiring" reaction.

Thus, it has to be emphasized again that the most dangerous form of ethnic phobia is domestic chauvinism, which poisons the social mood of all parties participating in the conflict.

Deformed Intensity

For each person to compare one's nation to other nations and other people is a normal, and healthy process, as long as the understanding of the differences does lead to the feelings of superiority and a belief in exceptional character of one's nation or ethnic group.

The aspiration to superiority also appears when the person's rights are restrained, as well as when the opportunity to display self and build personal well-being is denied. Such a person searches for economic, political, and other reasons of his/her predicament. However, the answer is often found in the national injustice towards particular individuals as well as representatives of certain ethnic groups or nations. Then the explanation of all failures, miscalculations, errors, and falls becomes extremely simple—the other ethnic groups are guilty of everything.

When people of other ethnic groups in search of superiority offend a person, he or she no longer looks exclusively into personal experience. Thus the danger of deformed national consciousness arises. After being exposed to "facts" and "figures" provided by nationalistic propaganda, such a person begins to link his/her experience with those of other representatives of his/her people. In such case, personal insults are added

to those insults and historical injustices suffered by one's ethnic group or nation. Unpublished sociological research conducted between 1992 and 1997 indicates that from fifteen to thirty percent of the respondents reflect this mode of thinking.

Domestic chauvinism certainly has some objective basis. During the period of Soviet rules, many miscalculations, errors, and bad decisions were made. Even the internment of the large number of people took place. Severe scars have been left on the historical memory of the people. Therefore, instead of promoting the search for historical justice, the past often serves as the excuse for revenge in form of the infringement of the rights and the freedom of other people.

Another reason for the occurrence of domestic chauvinism is the fact that in these turbulent times, many people have lost social and professional identity. Collective labour has been devalued. Also, the identification of oneself as a Soviet citizen or person has been rejected by the majority of people and remained only as an unpleasant memory. However, people cannot live without identifying themselves with their environment. In the conditions of disorder, the idea of national belonging became attractive for many people and filled the existing identification vacuum. Already in 1990, according to the data of an all-Union research, most of the respondents, 62 percent, felt pride for their own people and nation, and 30 percent for collective labour, while 38 percent for their city or village. Due to the growing disorder in the country, the tendency to identify with one's nation or ethnic group has increased even more and has become, in opinion of many sociologists, the leading for of social identification.[8] While considering this phenomenon and its role in the expression of the social mood, it is necessary to note that no single people or nation was free (and in foreseeable future will not be free) from domestic chauvinism. The dislike or even hate towards representatives of other peoples is displayed either openly and directly, or in a hidden and more passive way.

The most elementary form of chauvinism is represented by jokes about people of other ethnic backgrounds. These distortions of reality are fed by prejudices and negative stereotypes, from which no people are free. However, they are often the nuclei of domestic chauvinism, once they start to serve as the justification for the discriminatory policy and actions against other nations and ethnic groups.

A more serious and deep harbinger of domestic chauvinism is the aspiration or tendency to become isolated in homogeneous ethnic environment in work, social life, leisure, and daily life. However, the significant majority of the people in the former USSR (it is shown by the research done in the sixties and seventies) seemed to be free of such prejudices, and were even proud of the fact that they worked with colleagues from other ethnic groups, and had friends among them as well as sharing residence with the representatives of various ethnicities.

There are also people (and now this proportion has increased a little and makes up about 10%), who are convinced in the utility of mono-cultural collectives and mono-cultural friendship and oppose mixed marriages. What about many intellectuals, who pretend to be open minded and in theory accept mixed marriages, but object to their children marrying someone of different ethnic, national or racial origin? Such flaw in public consciousness and its active form—social mood, is not as harmless as it seems to be on the first sight. It can be even more noxious, if it is hidden under a verbal peel of conventional reasoning.

It is necessary to mention few more features of domestic chauvinism. It is insolent, unforgiving and often loud. These qualities of domestic chauvinism and the primitivism of their display have often greater social appeal than reasonable and judicious politics. When such dangerous social and psychological mechanisms persist, they can only be stopped by psychological measures or by other means which vagaries of the social mood would have difficulty overcoming.

It can be said without any exaggeration, that domestic chauvinism is perilous to all without exception—small and large ethnic groups as well. The majority of the people understand or intuitively feel it, for it is often the main cause of national conflicts, bloodshed, "ethnic cleansing" and even genocide. That is why their fear of ethnic conflicts caused by the domestic chauvinism and vagaries of social mood is almost as strong as fear of economic problems and open violence.[9] However, the problem would be only half as large if open daily dialogue and healthy common consciousness were allowed to limit its scope.

The scary fact is that domestic chauvinism is ingrained in state policy of many newly independent republics, especially when it comes to the local economic affairs. People have always been interested in their economic situation and the others. As long the comparisons on macro level were made by professionals and good journalists, counting who "got more" was not so dangerous. But when the problem of debts of other nations and other states received ethnic and national colouring, the comparisons between native people and other groups began. The latter were first called "migrants," or "uninvited visitors;" later they became "occupants."

Thus, a number of new states began organizing "ethnic cleansing." This policy was openly carried out in the Baltic republics, despite the fact that democratic reforms received powerful support form the majority of the local Russian population. Moreover, in a number of cases the Russian intellectuals supported claims to sovereignty. However, when their efforts and their merits were not only ignored, but also are used against them, the disappointment of many democratically oriented Russians was bitter.

But, even the Russian official policies employ domestic chauvinism. That, for example, is visible in the declarations of ultra nationalistic politicians such as Barkashov or Lisenko, who swing the bugaboo of broken Russian honour during the time of their election campaign of autumn 1995 and summer 1996. Unfortunately, many other political parties do not lag behind; trying to use, the most suitable and catchy ideas and slogans which have a strong nationalistic flavour.

Ethnic hostility did not arise suddenly. First, it ripened underground, thanks to the "merits" of the national-imperious elite. What it can turn to and what threats it poses to Russia, can be deduced form the experience of Yugoslavia and the events in Dniestr republic, Abchazia, Karabach, Tadzhikistan, Chechnya.

The war in Chechnya, in its initial stage, seemed to serve a patriotic purpose. The central government of Russia set the objective to bring order and punish those who conceived the notion of Chechnya independence that led to the break-up of the integrity of Russia. Yet the means to achieve this objective were chosen incorrectly, as the struggle with the initiators of sovereignty of Chechnya expanded into a war against all of Chechnya's people. At the beginning of the war, the sociopolitical mood of the majority of Russians was supportive to the government policy of restoring order in Chechnya. However, when the people realized the essence of this war, they started to protest very sharply against its continuation. It is a pity the Russian government responded to their opinion with the enviable indifference. Russia will dearly pay for that, because, Chechnya might not be completely restored even in the 21st century.

Domestic chauvinism also becomes dangerous if it is fed by ill-conceived discussions often supported by the media about "which culture is older than which," and "which ethnic group contributed more to literature," and "who had what and who owned which territory, and when" etc. People, previously at peace with each other, suddenly begin to remember personal insults, look for comfort in some historical events, tally up ancient wars which occurred on their territory and project their meaning onto the present situation. The official propaganda of the many arising states consciously stirs such interests in order to heat up the emotions and awake

unhealthy feelings of resentment and revenge, pushing the compatriots into dark business. Thus old wounds are opened again, and venom of hatred inflicts many sources of mass information.

Once domestic chauvinism is given a free ride, it promotes the rise of prejudice towards other ethnic groups in the name of ill-defined national interests. The end result is often an open display of hate leading to bloodshed, and long years of poisoned thinking, and deformed social mood.

Social Mood and Potential for Conflict

The analysis of the rise of ethnic self-consciousness in the former USSR, with all its pluses and minuses shows clearly, that it has high potential to create conflicts, and these conflicts in many respects determine the condition of the prevailing social mood. The study of the Centre of Sociology of interethnic relations in 1994 shows that, at present, in number of regions of the country, during ethnic conflicts, social status of the people of particular ethnic groups acquires a special meaning and affects the mutual relations between them. This is displayed in a number of cases:

1) In rather obvious functioning of negative national stereotypes in mass consciousness. When asked whether there is an ethnic group to which the respondents feel hostility, 11 percent of respondents in Bashkortostan, 27 percent in Moscow, and 24 percent in Kareliya gave an affirmative answer.

2) In a rather strong belief that the national belonging or ethnicity determines the economic and material situation of the people. Some respondents think that there are ethnic groups today that live financially better: 11 percent in Bashkortostan, 48 percent in Moscow, and 32 percent of Karelia. In the case of deterioration of a material situation some groups (especially Azeri, Armenians, the Jews) can become victims of these beliefs.

3) The support for infringement of ethnic interests is strong in the mass

consciousness. Russian respondents frequently speak about it.[10]

The conflict potential arising from the deterioration of social mood is often exacerbated by the personnel selection made by the authorities of all levels, both central and local. Very often, the appointment to the office, good job, and acceptance to high school depends on person's ethnicity. Also the decision to introduce one language as the state language, i.e. language spoken by the local ethnic group, and ignoring the role of the Russian language, augments to the problem.

Thus, the social mood is influenced by the objective processes that take place in the political life in the former Soviet republics. These include: the disintegration of USSR, declaration of independence of formerly allied republics, by creation of nation-state systems, by turning of a significant number of the Russian population into "second grade" citizens (this started with the passing of the law of the state language and not granting Russian any official status), with the inevitability of occurrence in the new states of Slavic movement and their links with the Russian national (or nationalistic) movement in Russia itself.

The existence of these and other problems in the life of the people of post-allied republics puts their social mood in a position of extreme instability and strong fluctuations. The results of sociological surveys, and also analysis of the literature and materials, published in press, transmitted by TV and the radio, enable the drawing of a conclusion, that the intensified social mood of the population during a transition period is subject to serious deformations.

There is another serious problem that has to be solved is that a certain part of citizens who previously had Soviet citizenship and certain rights, lost them after the collapse of the USSR, but did not regain them in the newly created states in which they found themselves. This is a legal and political, but not an ethnic problem. The rights of the individual, in opinion of the developers of the national doctrines in Russia, have an independent meaning and often do

not coincide with interests of the nation.[11] It is quite possible to agree with the authors, offering to divide problems of citizenship, and interests of ethnicities and peoples. But two things have to be kept in mind: that the rights of the people determine the character of the international and ethnic relations, the internal policy and the whole political climate of the states; and that the "human face" of these processes is social mood.

Taking into consideration all points of view, a legitimate way out of the given deadlock lies in the creation of a new union based on a commonly shared economic interests, cultural aspirations, legal values. This could be achieved by the unconditional removal of trade barriers, an establishment of a new economic and defensive union, and introduction of common citizenship.

The number of researchers believe, that in order to improve the interethnic relations, and to turn the social mood in the direction of positive emotions, it is not at all necessary to adhere to a one, uniform blueprint for peaceful settlement of various sorts of conflict. Most likely, during the search of ways for the formation of a positive social mood of the population it is necessary to be guided by the following principles:

- Principle of observance or restoration of peace between ethnicities and peoples, and resolving conflicts by only political and nonviolent methods;

- Principle of sequential democracy, including the observance of the rights of the individual, and the rights of ethnicities. These rights can be in conflict with each other. But that is what the art of political government should be all about—making acceptable decisions in each particular case;

- Principle of a flexible, individual approach to solving each problem in mutual relations between peoples, so that all sides can be satisfied;

- Principle of deep scientific expertise about regional wars and interethnic conflicts. In this area, due to imperious structures of the political establishment, it was impossible to avoid

impulsive politics that cost so dearly.[12]

The analysis of sociological information shows that in each republic the elements of ethnic separatism are displayed. And in these conditions, even if there will be positive changes in the economy and political sphere, the interethnic conflicts will not automatically disappear. They have their own logic, origin and development and can be characterized by rather heavy and steady inertia. Just as the historical memory of the peoples collects and keeps all the personal insults, the social mood of living generations is not capable of quickly overcoming feelings of ethnic hostility caused by the present unjustness. This is why the problems associated with realization and fulfilment of ethnic interests are capable of becoming—and in reality have become—the catalyst for alienation of people from each other.

Conclusion

The analysis of the degree of intensity of social mood allows to draw several conclusions.

Firstly, at each level of intensity both positive and negative features characterize the social mood. It displays itself not so much by the prevalence of some of them, but through their combination. This makes it hard to divide into clearly defined stages the ever-changing conditions and the content of social problems, as well as the fluctuation of a saturated social mood.

Secondly, the social mood-tension of both positive and negative character can accumulate secretly in the depths of public consciousness and can later develop into open forms of activity of the people.

Thirdly, any degree of intensity of the social mood in a reality can (and frequently it does) act in a deformed way, that is especially characteristic of societies in a transition period. In this case, the social mood has a great deal of suspicion, distortions and dislike of individuality.

Fourth, the social mood and degree of its intensity are hugely influenced by

historical memory of the people. For example, the preservation of the ethos of Northern Caucasus in the historical consciousness, especially the Caucasus war in the XIX Century,[13] as well as the memory of the huge shocks of the XX century (the civil war, World War II, the hardest years of reconstruction, and Stalin's reprisal in the 1930s and 1940s), play a significant role in the lives of local people. That explains the deep restraint of the people during economic and social conflicts.

It is beyond any doubt, that the strong intensity of the social mood in the Russian society, in many respects determines, and in the foreseeable future will determine the character of interethnic relations as well as the degree of interethnic conflicts. ■

Notes

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Interethnic Conflict: A Challenge for the Future of the Newly Independent States

Andre Kamenshikov

Abstract

This article focuses on the nature of interethnic conflicts in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The author discusses the prevailing patterns that characterize such conflicts and gives a brief account of the changes that took place in the newly independent states over the past decade that laid the ground for the present volatile sociopolitical climate there. Apart from the material causes of conflict, a lot of attention is given to psychological causes such as the loss of identity which is being compensated by a growing nationalism. In the opinion of the author, these psychological causes should be given much more attention in order to predict and prevent outbreaks of interethnic conflicts in the area.

Précis

Cet article étudie la nature des conflits inter-ethniques dans les nouveaux Etats indépendants de l'Ex-Union Soviétique. L'auteur décrit les principales caractéristiques de ces conflits et donne un bref compte-rendu des changements ayant eu lieu dans ces Etats au cours de la dernière décennie qui sont à l'origine de l'actuel climat sociopolitique volatile dans cette partie du monde. Mis à part les causes matérielles de conflit, une attention particulière est accordée aux causes psychologiques telle la perte d'identité qui est compensée par une nationalisme grandissant. Selon l'auteur, davantage d'attention doit être accordée à ces causes psychologiques afin de prédire et prévenir de nouveaux conflits inter-ethniques dans cette région.

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Conflicts that developed in the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union over the past decade surprised an international community unprepared to address the consequences effectively. Even less was it ready to engage in preventive activity. One reason is that these conflicts were unusual in their development, for the whole post-socialist and post-Soviet environment is an essentially new experience. Not all military conflicts in the former Soviet Union can be considered "interethnic". It does not apply, for instance to the October 1993 events in Moscow. One can say that to some extent, most conflicts had an "interethnic" component. The ethnic component may be obvious as in Karabakh, Abkhazia and Ossetia. This paper focuses primarily on conflicts that can be clearly characterized as "interethnic" though some conclusions may apply to other cases.

Seeking to understand interethnic conflicts that developed in the post-Soviet space one may discern strange patterns at first defying understanding:

1) Conflicts are often seen as a dispute over some kind of "pie"—territory, various types of resources, etc. However, in the case of the NIS it is difficult to discern which particular "pie" the dispute was about. While a certain redistribution of resources does occur, along with a serious decrease of everything, it is hard to speculate that this distribution was the real cause of conflict. We may also notice a tendency to see more "struggle over resources" component in conflicts appearing less "interethnic"—such as Chechnya or Tadjikistan.

2) It is difficult to fit the conflicts of the Newly Independent States into an "oppressor-oppressed" framework. Seventy years of Soviet rule had a profound "levelling" effect on the economic development of the regions of the former USSR with the result that it was generally the better-developed regions that perceived themselves to be suffering from the system. But after the disintegration of the USSR these concerns seem to have no reason to linger. When we look at local conflicts it is usually surprising how little evidence of real "oppression" can be found. Commonly, the oppression perceptions of both conflicting parties were much the same on both sides.

3) Finally, but most astonishing, for the short-term outcome of interethnic conflicts in the former USSR, we can observe more or less clearly a rule that "the weaker side wins." So far the time frame is insufficient to adequately appreciate long-term consequences. The Ingush-Ossetian conflict in the Suburban region of North Ossetia during 1992 may be an exception where the Ingush population was forced to leave while Ossetian forces were supported in a few days of conflict by Russian Federal troops. In Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Russia, small ethnic autonomies took on their central governments by an armed struggle reaching de facto independence with control over their own territory. This is commonly explained by claims of foreign interference. My experience throughout five years work as a peace activist in the conflict zones is that while such interference played its role, it was never sufficient to explain the paradox. In the case of the Russian government whose various branches are in constant struggle with each other, in practically every interethnic conflict of former USSR states, Russia sup-

ported both sides in one way or another and was consequently blamed or held responsible by both sides of each respective conflict.

To understand ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet states we must first understand the character of the changes taking place in these countries over the past decade. This means renouncing idealistic illusions about the events.

The dramatic change that took place on the territory of the former USSR during the 1980s and early 1990s was a "revolution from the top." It was not influenced by the masses at the base of the social pyramid, nor by idealistic intellectuals or former "dissidents." It was the huge bureaucratic elite, formed through many decades of communist rule, that pushed for reforms. These people had successfully climbed to high levels of the Soviet government apparatus and became tired of the limitations imposed on them by the communist system. *Perestroika* and *glasnost* served as their opportunity to move from managerial positions to become owners, so they could openly use resources under their control for increased personal consumption and power. This was a "bourgeois revolution" happening in unique circumstances.

Historically, such change came at an earlier stage of industrial development in countries where the majority of the population was peasantry with a fairly primitive life style and zero, or a very low level of, education. Changes in such societies would have much greater and more rapid impact on the position of the elite than on the mass population.

The situation in the USSR was utterly different. The Soviet Union was well developed by many parameters despite some serious deficiencies. More important, the old system on the one hand, left people totally unprepared for a market system, and on the other, had made people extremely dependent on the extensive social safety net. This comprised free (if low quality) medical care, free (and fairly good) education, free (though often inadequate) housing, subsidized transportation, utilities, etc.—together provided a fairly low but decent standard of living for almost the entire population. People were concerned not that the system was bad in itself, but that it was not functioning properly—it was not sufficiently "just." People were upset not that the system was forcing them to be "equal," but that some were "more equal than others". What first brought popularity to Russia's current president Yeltsin were his statements on the need to cut privileges of the ruling elite. His rhetoric blended well with—as Leo Tolstoy once put it—that "everybody is satisfied with his brain, but no one is satisfied with his money!"

Taking all into account, it is clear that the changes that happened went, rightfully or not, directly contrary to the expectations and wishes of most people. This is most notable in the privatization of state property in most post-Soviet states. A very appropriate historical analogy may be the case of European settlers buying for tokens huge pieces of land from American natives who obviously did not appreciate the significance of the transaction.

The changes caused destruction of most pieces of the existing "safety net" which had come to play a vital role in most people's lives. This was all complicated by the wrecking of the Soviet Union as a country and integrated trading region. So while the changes can be characterized as a "revolution from the top" they were like a devastating earthquake, destroying and disrupting the whole political, economic and social fabric of the existing social order. For most people, all that they counted on, hoped for, looked up to, was blown away. In such circumstances, it is amazing how patient and tolerant people have been, and how relatively little turmoil change of such magnitude has created so far.

Along with loss of life's "social fabric," the collective mentality has been severely affected on the psychological level.

Clearly, by no means everyone was totally committed to communist concepts. If this had been the case, such changes would have had no chance of taking place. But at the same time, many elements of communist ideology had become widely accepted and incorporated into the culture. Even before communism, there were collective traditions. Many "dissidents" opposing the old system wanted to reform it, so it would work according to its officially stated principles and teachings that were conspicuously betrayed by the official custodians. This can be clearly seen by studying the jokes of the times: "Communist leader Leonid Breznev invites his mother to visit him in Moscow. He shows her his huge apartment, takes her out to a huge mansion, a 'dacha,' and shows her his pool, etc. After he demonstrates all his wealth, she looks at him saying: 'Dear son, I am so happy for you, but I am so afraid of what might happen to you if the Bolsheviks come back!'"

In reality, the main reference frame of "ideological identification" for most people were elements of communist ideology—"Soviet" patriotism (i.e. nationalism) and ethnic, religious and cultural background. The basis for the first two elements was blown away by the gales of change. The more significant these were in people's minds, the more pronounced their perception of loss was.

Loss of social and psychological security led to a terrifying existential vacuum. Along with sudden loss of the Soviet organization and economy came new hardships associated with loss of the familiar "social fabric." People suddenly exposed to losses and new fears began to take refuge in fundamental ethnic and religious identities. The explosion of "nationalism" was not due to "lifting the lid" from any formerly repressed tensions. It is the direct result and manifestation of profound change.

The need for identity formation, the need to understand one's place and role in life, the need to know what to rely on, whom to trust and how to plan for tomorrow, i.e. psychological orientation and human security, is no less important for survival than the need for food.

Discord in people's minds can become manifest as social unrest or worse. It will be impossible to heal social conflicts without taking care of people's minds and their psychological needs.

Clearly, claims of various ethnic groups sharing the same territory, resources, and a contradictory interpretation of history, set the conditions for conflict. The peculiarity is that there might not be any "objective" reason to explain this. Interethnic conflicts come not as a result of contradictions over specific issues—though such issues are always present in conflicts—they develop on the base of the profound psychological impact that the changes over the past ten years had on the people of the former USSR. This psychological environment is liable to exploitation by a certain type of political aspirant that preys on national sentiments, historical events, and identifies scapegoats to blame for hardships that people face.

In order to better understand conflict dynamics, in addition to "material" factors (shortage of certain resources, economic inequality, etc.) we must recognize psychological and spiritual factors. It is especially important to understand the perception of loss over the past years influencing self-identification.

For the ethnic majorities in former Soviet Republics, "psychological loss" may be mitigated by winning independence. Ethnicity for them was relatively stronger than their "soviet" or "socialist" identity. Ethnic minorities in former republics traditionally placed hope in central government to "counterbalance" republican leadership. Now the "counterbalance" is gone, leaving minorities increasingly vulnerable. "Psychological loss" may not reflect a visible reality or decline in standards of living, availability of resources, etc. Some groups have come to fear losing their identity in the new environment. Such fear can mobilize strong responses in small or threatened groups and may induce formation of new coalitions or apparently irrational behaviour.

Wars in the former Soviet Union usually show a similar level of weaponry from the arsenal of the Soviet Army. In the absence of one side having a great technological advantage over the other, the situation favours "resources against dedication". The militaries of the Newly Independent States are sig-

nificantly stronger than opponents in terms of resources available, at least at the early stages of conflict. However, opponents are much stronger in the term of dedication to a cause. Wars may be divided into "those which can be lost" and "those which cannot be lost." So far, dedication, based on fear of losing the last "safe haven" in this troubled world—ethnic identity—has proven to be much stronger factor for the outcome of the crisis than visible advantage of having various resources necessary to manage the war. This is explains the so-called "weaker-win" phenomenon. More important than how strong you are, is how afraid are you of losing.

When we look at post-conflict situations today, we can observe that "winners" are in a comparatively worse situation than losers. The absence of economic resources worsened by the lack of international recognition plays its role in the long run. However, this situation only strengthens the power of the ruling elite and allows it to sustain fear of another war among local population, which increases risk for further conflict. Post-war regions suffer from high levels of crime—even compared to the high overall crime level of the former USSR. This facilitates further authoritarian rule (rather characteristic among the NIS states).

Toynbee: One cause for the recent outbreak of lawlessness in a number of fields of life is the turning of men into soldiers in the two world wars, and in the many local wars that have been waged since 1914. War is a deliberate reversal of the normal inhibition against taking human life. For a soldier, killing his fellow human being is a duty instead of being the crime that it is if he commits murder as a civilian. This arbitrary and immoral reversal of a major ethical rule is bewildering and demoralizing in itself. Moreover, a soldier on active service is torn out of his customary social setting and is therefore released from all his customary social restraints. When he is commanded to kill, it is no wonder that he also ceases to be governed by other normal inhibitions against raping, looting, and drug taking. The demoralization of American troops in Vietnam was an extreme

case of what always happens to soldiers on campaign.

Ikeda: In all ages, war brings this kind of demoralization.[1]

Desperation, crime, and authoritarian rule are factors leading to further strengthening of the existing vicious cycle and, consequently, to the future conflict. On the other hand, as time goes by, people psychologically adjust to the new environment and the possibilities for mobilizing them around the same goals as in the past diminish. This contradictory situation must be well understood when we consider choices the international community may have to address such problems.

It is unjust and counterproductive to try to solve these problems by applying new or other forms of pressure or violence. For example, applying economic sanctions against parties involved serves no one. Helping people to adjust economically and psychologically to the new situation; supporting "grassroots" activities and local NGOs as essential elements needed for building democratic civil societies, is a much better option for conflict prevention and resolution.

If we really want to understand what is going on in NIS states and be able to predict and prevent future outbreaks of violence, we must focus more research on psychological aspects of the present situation. We should examine such factors as: what have people lost over the past years in terms of their self-identification; how strong are their fears; and what events or phenomena may trigger violent or explosive responses etc.

My experience with interethnic conflicts is as a peace activist, not a psychologist. However, I have learned from my experience, that we must use psychological insight in analysis of these pre-conflict and conflict situations. A better psychology and wiser therapy seem to be needed in order to cope with continuing challenges in the Newly Independent States. ■

Notes

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Forced Migrants in Russia:
An Analysis of Russian Law from a Human Rights Perspective

Samuel Marie-Fanon

Abstract

This paper describes the "forced return" of Russian and Russian-speaking peoples in the new "Republics" to Russia as a consequence of the collapse of the USSR. Although these migrations bear all the earmarks of a refugee displacement, they do not fall within the legitimate definitions of forced migration. Consequently, these individuals are forced to endure all the trauma of displacement without recourse to the normative international or human rights remedies. The author suggests that two new categories, "returnees" and "returning migrants" be delineated to meet the needs of these individuals. Several examples of forced return are described in the paper to clarify the parameters of the problem and illustrate the consequences.

Précis

Ce texte décrit le "retour forcé" des personnes de nationalité ou de langue russe des nouvelles "Républiques" vers la Russie comme conséquence de l'effondrement de l'URSS. Bien que ces migrations présentent toutes les caractéristiques de la migration forcée des réfugiés, elles n'entrent pas dans la définition traditionnelle de la migration forcée. Par conséquent, ces individus sont contraints d'assumer les traumatismes de telles relocalisations sans pouvoir invoquer les remèdes du droit international humanitaire. L'auteur suggère que deux nouvelles catégories, "returnees" et "returning migrants" soient créés pour répondre aux besoins de ces individus. Plusieurs exemples de retours forcés sont donnés dans le texte afin de clarifier les paramètres du problème et en illustrer les conséquences.

One of the most dramatic consequences of the collapse of the USSR is the prob-

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lem of refugees and forced migrants leaving the former Soviet republics to settle in Russia. The most widespread phenomenon in this forced migration appears to be the exodus of Russians as well as Russian-speaking peoples from what Russian politicians call the "near Abroad," referring to the former Soviet republics.

Despite the fact that this migratory flow seems to be a classic case of mere repatriation from the perspective of international law, it however displays the very characteristics of forced migration.

Yet, there is no corresponding concept in international law, and, since they have not either left their home country or fled to Russia, forced migrants do not usually fall within the traditional concept of "refugee"[1] or that of "internally displaced person."[2] From a juridical and legitimate perspective, this issue is but a Russian Federation concern. Like the International Community, the "traditional" international organizations in charge of helping refugees, do not have the legal right to take care of them.

Yet, even if the status of a "forced migrant" is different from that of a "refugee" in terms of international law, their material deprivation and their living conditions are so similar that it might be interesting to study that legal specificity. Thus, one may ask that question: Is the Russian law regarding forced migrants adapted to the extent and seriousness of the issue? It might very well reveal the lack of political willingness of Russian authorities to get involved in the problem. Hence this creates a discriminatory situation as regards forced migrants, which does not abide the requirements of human rights.

Twenty-Five Million Russians in Quest of a Lost Fatherland

Due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, some 25 million Soviet citizens became

almost overnight Russians settled in a foreign country and the living symbols of a rejected regime.[3]

In a way, that sudden through passive paradoxical expatriation had been foretold for several years by growing anti-Russian feeling within the republics. In 1990, one could witness violent demonstrations against the Russians all over the country, from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Moldova to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. According to the statistics, some 200,000 Russians flew from Uzbekistan during that year.[4] The Soviet Far East was affected as well. In the remote autonomous republic of Tuvas, near the Mongolian border, the Russian exodus from the region culminated that same year, as the acts of violence towards them were getting more serious and more frequent.

Obviously, the process of migration knew an even more dramatic surge after the events of 1991.

It has been often and rightfully said that the collapse of the Soviet Union caused an even greater trauma for the Russians than for the other peoples who were once part of the Union. When its fall meant for the latter the return to a long denied sovereignty, it indeed belittled the Russians from the status of *"Primus inter Pares* country" to that of a decaying power on the verge of sinking into the Third World. The trauma certainly proved even more profound for those "Russian of the Empire." All the former "Plan migrants" who had been sent in the republics under the framework of the Soviet Plan and who benefited there from a privileged status suddenly became refugees-or at least regarded as such, "We did become refugees almost overnight. We are not the ones who left our country. It is our fatherland who forsook us."[5] The very use of the word "refugee" to qualify those people who had not already left the republics where they used to live, the way

this term was turned into account, showed how sound the bitterness of the "Russians of the Empire" was. Some of them refused to adapt themselves to the new reality, but it was in no way easier for the rest to "go back" to that Russia most of them had never lived in.

Many of them were left aghast at the failed coup of 1991. In a way, their situation could be compared to that of the Algerians of European origin in the months following the signing of the 1962 Evian Agreement.

In the parent state itself (i.e., the newly born Federation of Russia), the current changes stirred questioning and thought over the role of the "Motherland" both in the press and the political circles.

The "Russians of the Empire" took advantage of the democratization of the political system and the liberalization of information to voice their concern or their despair, and the power was, in a sense, called upon to answer for the situation. The authorities were gradually compelled to react, as their Russian brothers from the republics were now directly threatened by massive migration.

In the meantime, the fall of the USSR cleared the situation. As long as the Soviet Union existed, it was hard for the central power to deal with internal conflicts, since the "question of nationalities" had been officially settled. This proved easier when the sovereignty of the republics was proclaimed and acknowledged; the "responsibility" for the flows of refugees was to be shared between the former Soviet republics.

The Legal Framework

The law on Refugees was signed on 19 February 1993, and came into force on 20 March. The law on Forced Migrants was signed on 20 December 1995 and implemented on 28 December.[6] The first one defined the provision concerning the access to the status of refugee; the second one that of the status of forced migrant. When enforced, the texts were conflated with each other and it proved difficult to determine which law should apply to any specific case.

The texts were both very similar and radically different. They were very simi-

lar to one another because most of the criteria defining the status of the refugee could be found in those of the forced migrant. As a matter of fact, these criteria are those of the 1951 Geneva Convention. The Russian law pertaining to refugees was not specific.

But, as for the status of the forced migrant, the lawmakers added extra criteria in comparison with those of the refugee. Through that addition, Russia was taking care of the Russians wishing to leave the new independent states, not so much as a consequence of their being subject to persecution, but because the domestic situation in the republics would have deteriorated so seriously that it would have been impossible for the Russians to stay. This was for instance the case of the Russians living in Nagorno-Karabakh or in Abkhazia. More precisely, the texts made the distinction between two different categories based upon the concept of citizenship-a forced migrant was a Russian citizen or a former Soviet citizen living permanently on the territory of the Russian Federation and who fulfils the other provisions stated in the forced migrant laws. Moreover one must be aware of the fact that the displaced persons within the Russian territory being also considered as forced migrants, this very category proves rather vague in comparison with traditional international law.

In theory, both texts made a distinction between both categories. But in practice, the definitions appeared to be somewhat loose as a consequence of political interpretations and interference with other laws. The progress made by these two laws, i.e. the definition of two distinct statuses, was partly ruined by legal and political issues.

Even after the bills were passed, a great deal of politicians and civil servants kept on developing their own interpreting of the terms the lawmakers had decided to use. For instance, Yevgeni Chernitsov, the Government Spokesman, stated to the press that the people fleeing from Abkhazia during the war would be right away considered as refugees, whatever their citizenship.[7]

Even more disconcerting, if not more serious, were the statements of Tatiana Regent, the head of the Federal Migration Service (FMS), the most important agency in charge of the implementation of those laws. She too maintained confusion over the meaning of both terms, arguing that the key distinction had to be that of people fleeing from an armed conflict zone. According to her, people leaving Tadjikistan for example had to be primarily viewed as refugees. On the other hand, the way she considered forced migrants was closer to the traditional definition of "economic migrants"—for instance the Armenians fleeing Armenia for Russia under economical pressure.[8] Hence the prevailing confusion within the FMS and particularly on the lowest level, in the local registration offices.

But the key problem raised by these laws is that they both focus on the citizenship of the petitioner. Considering Russian law as regards citizenship, this very clause appears to be inapplicable in most cases.

As the "legal successor" of the USSR, the Federation of Russia passed a rather liberal law regarding citizenship. This text voted on 28 November 1991 and implemented on 6 February 1992 automatically granted Russian citizenship to those who used to live permanently on the soil of the Federation before that date. As for the foreigners and the Stateless persons, they had to be living in Russia for five years to have access to citizenship, that period being reduced to two and a half years for the refugees. That law defined as well a period of three years, during which any former Soviet citizen living in a former republic before 1 September 1991 could,[9] upon request, have access to Russian citizenship in case she/he was not already a citizen of a post-Soviet republic. After the three legal years, the former Soviet citizens had to apply for naturalization as any other foreigner.

The aim of the lawmakers was to prevent former Soviet citizens from becoming stateless persons overnight, as a consequence of the fall of the USSR. But they also wanted to spare them the risk of becoming the scapegoats of the Newly

Independent States (NIS). This only proved true in Latvia and Estonia, but in November 1991 one could seriously fear that those NIS would pass very restrictive bills concerning citizenship.

Actually, the period of three years was extended until 31 December 2000, thanks to an amendment passed by the Duma on 18 January 1995 and confirmed by Boris Yeltsin on 6 February 1995.[10]

By the end of February 1995, some 568,000 former Soviet citizens had obtained Russian citizenship. All of them were not registered as refugees in Russia, but those who were became forced migrants thanks to their newly acquired Russian citizenship. The criteria defined by the lawmakers in 1993 therefore proved inadequate since their implementation did not prevent the status to adapt to the situation throughout the years. For instance, in 1993, it was still not clearly stated whether the 44,400 Armenians and the 7,800 Azeris who had been registered as refugees in 1992 were still considered as such or as forced migrants.[11] As it is more interesting—in terms of material need—to be registered as a forced migrant since the government aid is more important than that granted to refugees, personal strategies and individual choice added confusion and vagueness to the current situation.

As they became aware of the imperfection of the system, the Federal Migration Service tried to clarify the situation regarding the enforcement of the law. More precisely, they issued an exhaustive list of the reasons why someone could not be entitled to participate in the mentioned categories. The economic migrants or the victims of an ecological catastrophe could be refused the status of refugee or migrant. Yet, these restrictions are far from meeting unanimous opinion within the FMS, since the director herself, Tatiana Regent, already basically considers forced migrants as economic migrants.

Human Rights Versus Forced Migrants Law

One might well question the relevance and the merits of the system of legal protection granted to "forcibly displaced persons" or forced migrants. Indeed, when it involves persons who possess the status of Russian citizens, whether they have acquired that citizenship before or after their arrival on the territory of the Russian Federation, they should not be distinguished in any way from all the other citizens. They have the same legal status and therefore should be able to enjoy all the rights and privileges conferred on them by such a status in conditions of ordinary law.

As citizens, they benefit from the protection of the Russian authorities both on the territory of the Russian Federation as well as abroad in the same way as would any other citizen. Maintaining the opposite would end in evaluating the concept of citizenship as defined in international law. Consequently, by granting such citizens a special status, the law has tended to confine them to a secondary status, treating them as though they were not complete citizens. Since they are Russian citizens, it is hard to see why they should be given the benefit of a special system for identification papers, protection against *refoulement*, and compensation for the loss of their belongings.

On these grounds they have no need whatsoever for a derogation of ordinary law, but should be able to benefit from it under the same conditions as any other citizens.

In the case of foreigners allowed to reside legally on the territory of the Russian Federation and who have been forced to leave their usual place of residence, the granting of the status of "forcibly displaced person" does not have any justification either. Once they have been allowed to reside legally on the territory of the Russian Federation and as long as they continue to fulfil the conditions for legal residence, there is no reason why they should be taken into account and legalized.[12] They should continue to benefit from the system of ordinary law applicable to foreigners allowed to reside on the territory of the Russian Federation. The fact that they are in a special situation, namely that they have been forced to leave their usual place of residence against their will, should compel the Russian authorities to treat them as "internally displaced persons" and provide them with the same assistance as that granted to Russian citizens placed in an identical predicament.

The different categories of persons affected by the "forcibly displaced person" law have no need whatsoever of a special system of legal protection. Therefore, they should be able to benefit from the legal protection of ordinary (law. While they do not need special protection they may, on the other hand, need specific assistance, the nature of which varies according to the conditions in which they have been displaced. Those who return to their country of origin for purely economic reasons and who no longer have any ties there, should be able to receive assistance to help them to integrate. Those who were victims of discrimination, who have had their human rights denied, or were caught in the midst of armed conflicts and have had to leave without being able to prepare for their departure, often in dramatic conditions, should be able to receive a more constant and specific assistance.

It is obvious that special provisions must be adopted by States confronted with such a phenomenon so as to allow the persons concerned to become integrated in the country to which they returned. On the other hand, there should be no need to create a specific legal category.

In the case of foreign nationals allowed to reside legally on the territory of a State, and who are forced to leave their place of usual residence because of violence, armed conflicts or serious disturbances in law and order, they quite naturally fit in the category of the "internally displaced persons," that international law defines.

In the case of persons who are citizens of the country to which they return, they should be considered either as "returning migrants," if they return for purely economic reasons or for personal ones, or as "returnees," if the reasons for their leaving are linked with armed conflicts, violations of human rights or serious disturbances in law and order in

their country of residence. These two existing categories, coming as they do under the general category of "migrants" should serve the task of establishing specific systems of assistance, yet they do not all imply any specific legal protection.

In addition to being curtailed by federal norms of lower status, the rights guaranteed by federal law and the Constitution are being eroded by regional regulations. A particularly prominent example of regional disregard for the human rights of forced migrants are the *propiska* regulations ("registration," to use the new terminology), i.e. residence permits required from individuals wishing to reside in a specific area in Russia.[13] Although Moscow has been particularly effective in undermining the rights of forced migrants through the use of strict *propiska* regulations, similar measures have been taken in several other cities and regions as well.[14] In addition, some regions have openly violated federal laws by adopting rigid quota for forced migrants in their jurisdiction. Yet it is obvious that federal should take precedence when local rules are in conflict with it, but in practice that principle is often disregarded.[15] In some cases, it is actually the gaps in and the outdated norms of federal law that prompted local authorities to adopt their own, often restrictive, rules on forced migrants.

Conclusion: The Need to Develop and Adopt a Draft Law on Repatriation

Migration policy, which has been aimed at holding back Russians in the former Soviet republics, can end only in disaster. In areas that have a high concentration of Russian (such as northern Kazakhstan or Ukraine), it remains critical to help Russians preserve their culture and way of life.[16] However, each person who links her/his fate to Russia must have the possibility of move in a civilized manner to Russia, which declared itself the successor state to the Soviet Union. Legislation today does not allow for such a possibility. Each migrant must prove that she/he (or all Russians) is a victim of discrimination

in his place of residence, which triggers a negative response from new independent States. A law guaranteeing support for voluntary migrants would fill the legislative vacuum in this area.

Thus the forced migrant law is obviously not adapted to the gravity of the issue. Moreover, it appears to be opposed to human rights for being too discriminatory. What can be the origin of the lack of political willingness within the Russian state—as shown by the enforced legal texts—when it comes to dealing with the problem of forced migrants?

Undoubtedly, Russian immigration is seen as a current economic and political burden rather than a future benefit. In addition to the costs of resettlement and higher unemployment, Russian immigrants have tended to throw their political support behind the most nationalistic politicians and parties.

Yet, this already serious issue, which is to become even graver in the coming years, might very well endanger the cohesion of the Russian State itself.

Therefore, a repatriation law would deem useful, if properly enforced, perhaps thanks to the International Community that could help the new Russian State by granting it the financial needs necessary to the enforcement of such a law. ∎

Notes

1. "UNHCR mandates do not apply to 'Russian Returnees'," in L. Grafova, "O krizisie sostradania napominayet vsemirnaya konferentsia PARINAK, prokhodivshaya v Oslo," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Moscow, (June 15, 1994).

2. Except for the population who flew from war in Chechnya, an autonomous republic which is still part of the Russian Federation.

3. According to the 1989 Soviet census. These Russians are the largest minority in Europe today.

4. U.S. Committee for Refugees, Chapter on Soviet Union, *World Refugee Survey 1991* (Washington, DC: USCR, 1991).

5. C. Messina, "Les otages de l'Empire," *Réfugiés*, no. 98 (Paris, Fall 1994): 13.

6. The laws of February 1993 were the very first attempt to provide the refugees and forced migrants with a legal status. For the first time, one tried to define the party

eligible for the assistance of the Federal Migration Service (FMS). The 1995 laws took over the principles of those of 1993 and are very similar. The new law supplies a recognized forced migrant with a five year status after the first registration.(The old law did not specify any standard form of the migrant identity card. As a result, the local authorities issued different cards, which were only valid in a particular geographic area. With the new law, the forced migrant identity card is standardized and therefore valid throughout the entire territory of the Russian Federation (Article 5).

7. U.S. Committee for Refugees, Chapter on Russian Federation, *World Refugee Survey 1996* (Washington, DC: USCR, 1996).

8. Ibid., 144.

9. The Baltic countries had officially ceased of being part of the USSR since 6 September 1991.

10. "O vnesenii izmeniia v zakon Rossiskoy Federatsii 'O grajdantsve Rossiskoy Federatsii'", *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, (January 18, 1995).

11. U.S. Committee for Refugees, Chapter on Russian Federation, *World Refugee Survey 1994* (Washington, DC: USCR, 1994).

12. N. Ayrapetova, "Migratsiya ne doljna byt' begstvom", *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow, March 1996).

13. "Both forced migrants and refugees, however defined, are having a difficult time in the face of persistence of 'propiska' (requiring by law that residence permits from the local police secured) and the shortage of special provisions." E. Voutira, "Vestiges of Empire: Migrants, Refugees and Returnees in Post-Soviet Russia," *The Oxford International Review*, 1996.

14. In Moscow, acquiring a forced migrants status is now inextricably linked to obtaining a temporary or permanent Propiska. Local migration services orient their work on the definition of forced migrant in accordance with law, but on whether the applicant will be able to get settled in the city. The lack of status leads to complete deprivation of social services.

15. See Russian Federation Constitution, art. 76(5): "If there is a contradiction between federal law and another act issued in the Russian Federation, the federal law prevails."

16. "The changes perceived as a national revival by representatives of the indigenous Nation, are perceived as a social catastrophe by people belonging to the 'imperial' Nation (i.e. Russians)," in J. Chinn and R. Kaiser, *Russians As the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996). ▫

Belarus is Going back to ... Past or Future?

Yakov Basin

Abstract

Using media information and "leaks" from those within influential circles close to the President, the author analyzes the development of the political climate in Belarus. He shows that the government is actively searching for ideas and ways to bring a new order to the country. According to the author, there are many ideologists who want to turn Belarus into a fascist state. The author cites examples of proliferating anti-Semitic activities, often of a criminal character, as one of the most visible signs of this political trend.

Précis

À partir d'informations venues des médias et de "fuites" issues des cercles proches du président, l'auteur analyse le développement du climat politique en Bélarusse. Il montre que le gouvernement recherche activement des idées et des moyens pour instaurer un ordre nouveau dans le pays. D'après l'auteur il y a de nombreux idéologues qui veulent transformer le Bélarusse en état fasciste. L'auteur cite en guise de signes les plus visibles de cette tendance politique, l'exemple de la prolifération d'activités antisémites, souvent à caractère illégal.

President Lukashenko Is Pushing to Form a Fascist Country

The Belarus Government is actively searching for new ideas and ways to bring order to their country. Some of them directly affect the Jewish minority group. In particular, there is a lot of information telling about the possible embrace of monarchical past, revival of the Noble society, and even the forma-

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tion of an "Aryan," fascist state.[1] However, as a rule, such information hardly ever appears in media, since the government plays a major role in all of these political processes.

On July 9, 1997, there was a meeting in the Institute Belinformprognosis in Minsk organized by its director O. G. Simenko, and the administration of the President of Belarus. The main theme was "The Knowledge at the Crossroads of Reforms." The discussion was concerned with creation of a new political order in Belarus. That meeting was open only to people representing the government.

The speech on "Aryan roots" of Slavic people, an order of society based on the believe in the genetic superiority of the Aryan (in this case Slavic) people political, and the perspectives of such ideology constituted the main event of the program. It was presented by B. B. Danilov, an academic of Russian Academia of Science, and Chairman of Department of Natural Science, specially invited from Moscow for that meeting. Danilov had already been in Minsk one and half years ago accompanied by some other delegate. During that time he found many people who supported his ideas there. Before the meeting started, they were selling many brochures from the series *Arijskij Put'* (Aryan Way).

As expected, Danilov's speech touched a Jewish theme. He claimed that:

> ... Jews forcefully imposed the Jewish-Christian religion. Christianity is not a Russian religion; Prince Vladimir, who was a Jew, imposed it. People say that we are fascists, but the Jews rule the world today; we just call things as they are ...

In addition, the speaker proposed the solution to the problem. According to him, there is no such thing as democracy in this world, thus the country should be ruled from the top, as it is the

case in patriarchal societies. He praised Khomeini revolution which, according to him, could be used as a blueprint to make his visions come true.

During the meeting there were only three individuals who took a stand against the speaker. In return, E. Skoblev, the Editor of Information Bulletin of Presidents Administration and a popular writer as well as ardent anti-Semite, attacked them. In response to the criticism expressed by Professor B. O. Chramov, (a politician, who found the position of Danilov unacceptable in any civilized society and who used to believe that the idea of totalitarian society had no perspective in Belarus), Skoblev said:

> I am one of the allies of the president. However, your presentation is a dirty trick. I totally agree with Danilov. Our audience is ready to understand us; the dispute is not good. Our politics is held upon the following: either we accept everything that was said so far, or not. Definitely, whatever Mr. Danilov said was right. I express my greatest regards to the Professor Semenkov for inviting Mr. Danilov.

Skoblev is also known for his articles published in an anti-Semitic journal *Politicheskij Sobesednik* (Political Interlocutor) where he, literally, offered "to take a gun" to resolve all problems which he believed were caused by the Jewish people. In the beginning of 1997, A. Lukashenko rewarded E. Skoblev with a new title of the Senior Specialist in Culture.

The participants of the meeting discussed concepts described in the Danilov's brochure *Arijskij Put'*. Especially an idea of gaining a power in the country, as well as forming an Aryan empire based on the ideology of the National Socialist Party, attracted attention of the participants. According to Danilov, the ruling party must have the following gradation of members: Aryan

activists, Aryan Socialists, and "True" Aryans. Only the last group should have the right to take part in secret meetings. G. Rusov, the Senior Editor of *Lichnost* (Personality), a very anti-Semitic newspaper, made the presentation.

The overall tone of the speeches as well as the ideas presented during the meeting were enough to realize in which political direction President Lukashenko was heading to.

Criminal Character of Anti-Semitism

The summer of 1997 was remembered as time of anti-Semitic crimes in Belarus. In particular, the Jewish cemetery was destroyed in the area of Prudke in Gomel (an exact date of such a barbaric act is not known). At night of July 3, just before the holidays dedicated to the liberation of Belarus from fascism, a young Jewish boy named E. Dobromislin was brutally killed in his own apartment in Minsk. Based on publications from the Jewish newspaper *Aviv*,[2] the young boy was tied, bitten, and cut, while the criminals drank alcohol and listened to the music. When the victim's mother came back home, she found her son lying down on the floor bleeding. His breathing stopped. After five month the case remained open. The police have arrested one of the murderers. He, indeed, refused to betray others. Before the murder took place, the victim was threatened for several months. The criminals demanded money, as well as video equipment which the victim did not have. The prosecution knew the names of these criminals, but was unwilling to arrest them. In addition, an object that resembled a cross was found in the place where the murder occurred. The victim's parents suspected that the murder followed a ritual character, because absolutely nothing was missing from the apartment that day.

One more fact brings attention to which murder that took place on Zaslavsky Street in Minsk. It happened not far from the place where somebody often knocks down the signs with names of the righteous people, and does such outrageous acts as crushing the monuments.

Another case involved Albert Labrenev, an orthopedist from Minsk, who worked in the hospital that was recently closed. Labrenev was convicted for an organized murder of his neighbour, a 62-year-old female, who was severely beaten and died later in the hospital. The woman was found at her apartment having multiple skull traumas. A. Labrenev was arrested based on the evidence provided by the victim's son. The trial verdict was to put him behind bars for five years. The court decision was based information provided by victim's relatives only, who claimed that the victim told them about the whole incident before her death. According to her, Labrenev came to the apartment escorted by two other men. These men started beating her while Labrenev was observing the whole incident. A tense relationship between Labrenev and victim's family, which kept complaining that Labrenev "flooded" her apartment on purpose, was the alleged motive of that crime. However, the expertise proved that the victim had psychiatric problems expressed in the form of mania that "the neighbour put her under the spell."

According to the testimony of neighbours, before the accident, the victim's children threatened Labrenev for a month. The threat was accompanied by anti-Semitic slanders. The aspect of anti-Semitism was emphasized during the trial many times. However, Labrenev did not highlight that aspect, since he was afraid for the life of his family. His daughter was in hiding for over two years. He and his wife lived in their friend's house.

Labrenev spent one year in prison before the case was reviewed by the Supreme Court of Belarus. The next trial was carried out without a witness hearing and was based on psychiatric expertise. As result, the expertise showed that the victim was not able to give adequate information about the crime to her relatives, since there were some suspicions concerning her ability to speak after the beating, although she was conscious at that time. It also appeared that the death occurred as a result of a surgery because of *hematoma*. Eventually, the court found Labrenev not guilty.

Right after the announcement of the verdict, the victim's son tried to attack Labrenev inside the court. Labrenev suffered arm fracture before the fight was stopped. In addition, the victim's daughter shouted: "You will decay in the prison one way or other."

In the opinion of observers the victim's son was probably connected with some sort of criminal organization. During the trial, some facts also hinted to his connections with police. It is quite possible that his mother was a victim of Mafia. Also the real criminals, the two individuals who did the beating, were not found, because after the first conviction and trial of Labrenev the case was closed. If a new verdict stays in power, the judge might have many problems, since Labrenev would be eligible for compensation of material and moral losses.

Problems of Jewish Organizations with Registration

In Belarus, it is still very hard for Jewish communities to be registered. Out of all applications, only one was successful. The Progressive Community of Judaism was not allowed to register using the address of humanistic organization Huffed Rahamim in Grodno. It had to register at the home address of one of the members of the organization. However, the situation was the opposite in Bobruisk, where the registration at home address was not allowed. Until now, the matter concerning the registration of local Jewish communities has not been resolved. No one can influence the authority of Bobruisk in making any decision about it. In a letter to B. C. Reinhold, the leader of the local Jewish community, the representative of the authority, I. Savchenko, promised to come back to the matter concerning the agreement on registration of the Jewish progressive community and resolve it according to law. He agreed that the absence of localization was not a good reason for denial registration of religious organizations. But nothing has changed since than. However, the delay

could be explained by the fact that new policy regarding those matters has not been formulated yet.

Nationalism and Anti-Semitism in the Media

The nationalism in Belarus is on the rise. In the middle of December last year, Minsk was visited by a group of writers who expressed their support for the President Lukashenko, who was viewed by them as the one who could "save" their Slavic nation. Among the members of that delegation were M. Alexeev, Proskurin, V. Karpov, V. Rasputin, and A. Kasinsev. The last one is a father of contemporary anti-Semitism in the country. He is also a senior editor of a journal *Nash Sovremennik* (Our Contemporary). Nowadays, Minsk is full of newspapers such as *Slavyanskaya Gazeta* (Slavic Newspaper), for example, that have anti-Semitic character. One of the articles published in this newspaper, "Kto goniayetsya za prezrakami" (Who Is Pursuing Illusions?) was a reaction to the report of Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, "Anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union, 1995–1997." The conclusion to a long dispute, which was not supported by any valid arguments, was very symptomatic:

> We can only guess if authors of this report have ever been in the Kremlin. If they could not get there to attend a celebration of Jewish holidays, as well as music concerts of famous stars having Jewish origins, they could visit a White House in order to answer the question of who rules Russia. The invasion and the platitude of

strange and aggressive "culture" desecrate the Kremlin walls that are so relic for the Russian people ... The grandchildren of creditors and salesman have always had illusory dreams ... Slavic souls are just considered as a dust of civilization (as Leiba Bronstein, i.e. Trotsky, used to call it) ... Trotsky was one of the bloody dictators of Revolution. Now, likeminded reformists, who continue to steal Russian riches, and make Russia a poor country, honour him.[3]

Another newspaper, *Slavyanskij Nabat* (Slavic Alarm), started to publish some articles written by one of the most reactionary representative of Orthodox Church who died two years ago. His name was Johan. In one of his articles, "Bitva za Rossiyu" (A Fight for Russia),[4] he uses a text of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to make his point. Johan's articles make a mockery of nations which believe in a constitutional order. In the above mentioned article, he openly stated, "A constitution as you know, is nothing more than a 'school' of fights, quarrels, and useless agitations; in other words, this is a 'school' that makes a nation helpless." These words were written in a form of citations from *Protocols*. In the conclusion the author stated that enemies to the absolutism, which should be a true form of national order, were those who accepted a constitution, and, of course, Jews were mentioned among them.

Quite recently, between September 19 and 26, 1997, the newspaper *Svobodnie Novosti Plus* (Free News Plus), which is of centro-right orientation but close to democrats, published the so-called sa-

tirical comments of P. Lud, who stated: "One man told people, who is responsible for all troubles. Neither the writer, nor the farmer. Again we are being disturbed by the children of Moses."[5]

The anti-Semitic newspaper *Lichnost* has accused vice-president I. Pashkevich for a desire to form of "multi-confessional" state. It seems that the nationalists would like to give the same power to the Orthodox Church as in Russia. In August of 1997, an analysis of the institutional anti-Semitism in the media was sent to a vice-president I. Pashkevich by L. Levin, a president of all Jewish communities in the country. Officially no answer followed. The anti-Semitic articles continued to be published, especially in Slavic newspapers of nationalistic orientation. In the middle of December last year, the new text of such analysis was prepared. According to a decision made by Jewish Council, that analysis has to be sent directly to the Supreme Court of Belarus for a review. ■

Notes

1. This was highlighted by A. Feduta, one of the former allies of President Lukashenko, in his article "Obiknovennij slavyanski faschizm" (The Ordinary Slavic Fascism), which appeared in *Belarusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, nos. 63–65, 1997.

2. *Aviv*, no. 7, 1997.

3. "Kto goniayetsya za prezrakami" (Who Is Pursuing Illusions?), *Slavyanskaya Gazeta*, no. 3, 1997.

4. Johan, "Bitva za Rossiyu" (A Fight for Russia), *Slavyanskij Nabat*, no. 27 (November 13–19, 1997).

5. P. Lud, *Svobodnie Novosti Plus*, September 19–26, 1997. □

Sociopolitical Situation in the Northeast Caucasus: Challenges to Nongovernmental Organizations ,

Andre Kamenshikov, Vladimir Sukhov, and Mikhail Charaev

Abstract

The authors provide a general analysis of the sociopolitical situation in three basic regions of the Northeast Caucasus, Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, from the perspective of practical action in the area of humanitarian and charitable activities there. These efforts are directed toward assisting the interaction and implementation of constructive programs on the level of international and nongovernmental organizations, as well as on the level of individual initiatives. Thus, the authors cite examples of organizations which have been successful in these initiatives. They also describe projects that may be implemented in the near future.

Précis

Les auteurs fournissent une analyse générale de la situation socio-politique de trois régions cruciales du Nord-Est Cau-

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As the situation in the Northeast Caucasus, Chechnya in particular, has changed for the worse since the article was written, the authors do not recommend that any organization or individuals go to work there, because of the high security risk involved.

casien: la Tchétchénie, l'Ingushetie, et le Dagestan, dans la perspective de l'action pratique en matière d'intervention charitable et humanitaire. Ces efforts sont dirigés vers une évaluation de l'interaction et de la mise sur pied de programmes constructifs au niveau des organisations internationales et non-gouvernementales, autant qu'au niveau des initiatives individuelles. Les auteurs citent donc des exemples d'organisations ayant eu du succès dans la mise en place de telles initiatives. Ils décrivent aussi un certain nombre de projets en préparations.

Introduction

Disintegration of the Soviet Union, economic crises and the development of many ethnic and political conflicts in the territory of the Newly Independent States (NIS), i.e. former republics of the USSR, have created a new and unexpected challenge to the global community, a challenge, for which it appears to be poorly prepared. The global threat of mutual destruction coming from a nuclear arms race has diminished, but it was replaced by a whole series of destructive processes and crises in many regions of the former socialist camp. These crises take place on a regional level, but have an extremely negative combined influence on the global scale.

One of the most serious consequences of these regional crises is the multimillion flow of forced migrants—people, whom military conflicts, nationalism, the lack of economic perspectives, and ecological disasters have forced to leave their homes in search of security and a tolerable future.

However, we may note certain positive changes, like the fact that 1997 was the first year after the disintegration of the USSR to begin in a situation when all military conflicts in the Newly Independent States have been formally terminated.[1] But the probability of renewed military actions remains quite high, especially in Karabakh, Abkhazia, Chechnya and Tadjikistan, where huge problems caused by war remain unsolved such as the problem of hundreds of thousands of refugees, for whom the road to their homes remains closed.

When speaking about the reaction demonstrated by the global community in reply to the arising problems and crises, it is important to note the following:

- First, the rapid development of events and the occurrence of numerous crises in the post-Soviet territory was largely unexpected (despite some predictions by various analysts). There was no preliminary plan for a response to these events. As a result, many opportunities for preventive actions against upcoming crises were missed, though they would certainly have been better than responding at a later stage.

- Secondly, today there is at least a formal understanding of the necessity to react to the arising problems, instead of letting things "burn out on their own." And, though the resources selected for these purposes so far are rather limited, a certain role of international organizations is felt in practically all conflict zones of the post-Soviet countries.

International reaction to crises in the Newly Independent States of the former USSR could be formally divided into three levels:[2]

- First, the level of direct interstate relations between the various Newly Independent States and other countries.

- Second, interaction of the NIS with international and intergovernmental institutes, such as the UN, EC, OSCE, NATO, IOM, ICRC, and their various structures (UNHCR, ODIHR, UNESCO, etc.).

- Third, the activities of non-governmental organizations, churches, public initiatives.

This article is directed to assist the interaction and the implementation of constructive programs on the second and particularly on the third level, that is, on the level of international and nongovernmental organizations, as well as on the level of individual initiatives. It includes some general analysis of the situation and the prospects for such activities in the Northeast Caucasus—a region in which today probably the most pain and human suffering of the entire post-Soviet territory is concentrated.

Many of these organizations and groups (and in some cases individual activists) are "insiders" in the situations and must be included as essential components in the framework of any NGO activities in troubled areas. Without their cooperation various programs of humanitarian assistance, trust building, conflict prevention, human and minority rights protection run a high risk of not addressing the most important needs and concerns of the people and communities they are designed to help. Such local groups and organizations can also "open doors" for large international organizations and enable them to carry out their activities in areas, which are impossible to reach otherwise due to bureaucratic obstacles or unacceptably high levels of risk.[3]

However, even simply developing and maintaining contacts with small local NGOs, groups and activists, which is an obvious precondition to any active cooperation, meets with serious difficulties. The greatest of them usually are:

1. The nascent character of most of these groups, which:
   - often came to existence as "ad hoc" groups of people, suddenly faced with extreme hardships;
   - usually have no clear developed strategy and are overwhelmed by urgent concerns;
   - receive support, if any, which is far behind even the immediate needs they face; and

- operate with a staff of volunteers, who often change, creating problems for the continuity of operations.

2. Difficulties in communication: rare and poor phone lines, slow and unreliable mail, absence of local providers of email while computers remain relatively expensive.

3. Mistrust—organizations which are based in or have permanent representation and work out of the country's capital are often seen as being somewhat "in bed" with the government, which may be correctly or incorrectly perceived as the main cause of the problem in the first place,[4] especially if the work is going on in a region struggling for independence or autonomy. In situations of military conflicts a major problem becomes the "spy-mania," that often reaches an absurd level. This has to do with the former "Soviet" upbringing of most "modern" NIS politicians as well as with the occurrence in conflict regions of many "security" structures, which need to somehow justify their existence. Negative experience with other NGOs or international agencies may also contribute to this problem.

4. Criminality and problems of personal safety. Robberies, kidnappings, and even murders of the employees of humanitarian missions in conflict zones are unfortunately no rarity and the situation is getting worse. (Chechnya has become especially "famous" in this regard. It is sufficient to remember the wild murder of six employees of the International Committee of the Red Cross.)

5. Transportation, which is often difficult and unreliable. It may become an obstacle for foreigners because of time constraints and the need to obtain special permits to visit certain areas, and for national NGOs because of cost.

Finally, at the other end, there is often a psychological "mind block" that stands in the way of developing direct cooperation between fairly large international agencies and small groups and

organizations directly from the troubled areas. The former often tend to disregard the latter (not least, due to lack of information) and either carry out all activities themselves or rely on already well-known organizations. This is often quite costly, time consuming and does not take full advantage of existing opportunities.

All these problems result in the fact, that though over the last years quite a few international organizations have gained considerable experience working in the NIS and many national NGOs became fairly widely known for their work on problems of refugees and forced migrants, the activities, of no lesser importance, of many local organizations, groups and individuals from the conflict zones themselves remain either unknown or overlooked.

This is especially true in regards to the Russian Federation with its vast territory, complicated ethnic composition, huge problems and serious distinctions between the situations in different regions.

With the purpose of helping to overcome this lack of information about local NGOs and activists, and in order to analyze possible developments that may cause migration flows in the future, the "Northeast Caucasus NGO Networking Project" was carried out. It included three long missions by the representatives of Nonviolence International (Andre Kamenshikov, Vladimir Sukhov, and Mikhail Charaev) to the regions of the North Caucasus, mainly Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Dagestan, which took place in the fall of 1996. The project has been implemented within the framework of the Forced Migration Projects of the Open Society Institute.

Situation in the Northeast Caucasus

Conditions and Prospects for Humanitarian and Charitable Activities in This Region

The Northeast Caucasus is probably the most complex region in the entire post-Soviet territory. A complex ethnic composition, a weak economic base in comparison with other regions, a short-

age of land resources, a problematic historical and cultural inheritance, which includes the tragic experiences of many decades of the Caucasian war and Stalin's deportations of entire peoples—these are just some of the factors that already resulted in two large-scale armed conflicts in the territory of this fairly small region.

In October 1992, the Ossetian-Ingush conflict took place in the territory of the Suburban (Prigorodny) district of North Ossetia, which cost many hundreds of lives. The Ingush people together with the Chechens had been deported from their homes and sent to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia on February 23, 1944, under a decision by Joseph Stalin. When they were permitted to return in 1956, the Prigorodny region and the appropriate part of the city of Vladikavkaz, where they had lived before deportation, remained under the administration of North Ossetia. Instead, two districts were added to the restored Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic on the northern bank of the Terek river—former Cossack lands that were slowly populated mostly by Chechens, but not the Ingush.

The conflict between the Ossetians and the Ingush in the Prigorodny region left many hundreds dead and up to 70 thousand refugees, predominantly Ingush people from the Prigorodny district who fled to the newly created Ingush Republic. More than half of these people still cannot return to their homes, and often there are no homes to return to.

Nevertheless, the terrible tragedy of the Prigorodny region fades in comparison with the consequences and losses in the course of the Chechen war, which is, probably, the most tragic event in the territory of the former USSR since World War II.

In the autumn of 1991 a as result of a number of events, which are considered by the Russian leadership today as a coup d'état, while the Chechens themselves consider them a national liberation revolution, a new government came to power in Chechnya headed by a former Soviet Air Force General, Djokhar Dudaev. An independent

Chechen state was proclaimed and Chechen armed structures began to form. For three years, the Federal government basically closed its eyes to the events in Chechnya, then it decided to overthrow Dudaev's government. At first, the plan was to do this by supporting opposition forces inside Chechnya militarily and financially, which included sending "volunteers" from the Russian Army to help in this operation. When this attempt collapsed the federal government went on with a full-scale military intervention in Chechnya, which was called "an operation for restoring constitutional order."

The Chechen war, which continued for nearly two years and has been formally declared over in August of 1996, became the most humiliating event for the Russian leadership. Tens of thousands were killed, hundreds of thousands became refugees, cities such as Grozny and Gudermes were partially destroyed and many villages have suffered seriously, quite a few of which were practically levelled to the ground. The same Chechen leadership remained in power that was there before the war—except for president Dudaev who was allegedly killed in April of 1996.

Outside Chechnya the cities of Budeyonovsk (in the territory of the Stavropol Region) and Kizlyar (in the Dagestan Republic) became objects of Chechen terrorist raids. And the Dagestan village of Pervomaiskoe was levelled to the ground as a result of the disgraceful operation of "eliminating the terrorists and freeing the hostages." This operation was organized and carried out under the personal control of the Russian minister of Security and resulted in destroying the village, while most of the terrorists managed to escape and even take with them many of the hostages.

The tragic events in the Prigorodny region and in the Chechen republic have caused a noticeable response among various international organizations and agencies, working in the field of humanitarian aid. Many organizations began to work in the North Caucasus, such as UNHCR, ICRC, MSF, IOM, Doc-

tors of the World, International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Islamic Committee on Disability and Rehabilitation and many others. The activities of most of these organizations are very important. However there are many problems and difficulties connected to this work as well. The most serious of them concern questions of safety for the members of humanitarian missions (especially in their work on the territory of the Chechen republic) and ensuring that the help provided reaches the groups of the population that are in most need. It is obvious that in solving both of these questions assistance from local NGOs and activists may be of great help.

On the one hand the tragic events "awaken" the activity of many people, who respond to the problems they face. On the other hand the presence of international organizations, the implementation of various assistance programs creates certain new job opportunities, which often become nearly the only ones in an area torn apart by war.

And this leads to some risks. First of all humanitarian missions may find themselves in the situation of a pie, around which there is a fight going on. Second, local people who for a rather long time have been working for them will face a problem of readapting when their jobs will have to go.[5]

Thus, there is a paradoxical situation, on the one hand there is an incalculable number of problems in the solving of which NGOs could play an important role and on the other hand there is a kind of "unemployment" among NGOs and people who declare their readiness to carry out the large-scale programs but have not learned to cooperate with each other and don't have the necessary resources for implementing the projects they declare.

In a situation when there is such a "market" of "unemployed" organizations and activists it becomes quite difficult to "separate the corn from the husk." However, the situation can also be seen as an important potential for creating a significant "third sector" in the conflict areas, through which civil

activity of the population can be expressed and exercised.

Luckily there are quite a few organizations, which already have significant experience of work over the last few years, thus allowing for an estimation of their efficiency. But it is also important to keep in mind that quite often those organizations, which did the most work, cared less than others about documenting those activities and attracting public attention to themselves.

So, in order to select the best partners it is helpful for humanitarian organizations to exchange information between each other. Also it is helpful to be in touch with human rights organizations and journalists who have significant work experience in this area.

Following we provide a bricf list of organizations and journalists who, as we know, have spent a lot of time working in the North Caucasus and therefore may act as consultants for other groups.[6]

Organizations

Nonviolence International–New Independent States (NI–NIS), 101000 Moscow, Louchnikov Lane 4, entrance 3, room 2, tel./fax: 206–8853; tel.: 351–4855; 206–8618; email: ninis@glas.apc.org, Andre Kamenshikov.

Human Rights Centre "Memorial," tel.: 200–6506, email: memhrcentre @glas.apc.org, Tatyana Kasatkina.

Ryazan Human Rights Society "Karta":[7] 390000 Russia, Ryazancentral P.O. Box 20, tel.: 0912–77–51–17, email: karta@glasnet.ru, http://www.openweb.ru/ryazan http://www.glasnet.ru/ ~hronline/ngo/proj/rjazan/mem-r.htm, Andrey Blinushov.

"Committee of Soldier's Mothers of Russia": 101000 Moscow, Louchnikov Lane 4, apt. 32, tel.: 928–2506, Valentina Melnikova.

"Order of Mercy and Social Protection," 127490 Moscow, Pestelya Street 6B; tel./fax: 903–7995, tel. 903–7993, Evgeniya Poplavskaya.

"The Right to Life and Human Dignity" Society, 103982 Moscow, Louchnikov Lane 4, entrance 3, apt.

19, tel.: 206–8589; tel./fax: 963–9929, Victor Kogan-Yasny.

Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development, tel.: 241–3487; 240–0862; tel./fax: 241–3487, Chris Hunter, email: peacecentre @glas.apc.org

The Organizing Committee of the Agreement "For Peace and Freedom, Against the Bloodshed in Chechnya," Ludmila Vahmina, tel.: 299–1180, fax: 973–2094.

Journalists Who for a long time worked in the North Caucasus

Alexander Mnatsakanyan, *Obshaya Gazeta*, tel.: 915–7078.

Yulia Kalinina, " Moskovskiy Komsomolets," tel.: 946–6293;

Alexander Yevtushenko, " Komsomol Pravda," in Pyatigorsk tel.: (87900) 59–504.

Andrei Mironov, independent journalist and human rights advocate, tel.: 251–8348.

Correspondents of NTV news (Boris Koltsov, Elena Masyuk, Alexander Habarov, Vladimir Luskanov), tel.: 217–5277, 217–5431, 217–5436.

It is also necessary to note, as a rather important information resource, the Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning of Conflicts, created by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science within the framework of the project "Settlement of conflicts in the post-Soviet space." It unites by email about thirty experts from different regions of the NIS including some in the North Caucasus.

When working in the Caucasus in order to get a real understanding of a person's work it is important to keep a very cautious attitude toward any words and stories people tell about their activity. During a conversation it is desirable to stay away from general statements and to find out about the details and specific examples of work. At the same time it is important to keep in mind the fact that people easily become alerted when they are questioned. This is especially the case in Chechnya where there is a huge "spy-mania."

So, during conversations with people engaged in freeing and/or exchanging prisoners of war, hostages, searching for the "missing" and kidnapped it is important to avoid questions (unless they are absolutely necessary) like "where" and "through whom was it possible to find a person," "who is guilty of his detention," etc. And it is especially important to avoid questions about where and how people were able to gather this or that information.

Obviously there is no unique method of "quality checks" of an organization or a person. Some mistakes are inevitable in any large-scale work. This is important to understand, and not to be discouraged by mistakes but to try to minimize them and their consequences by being cautious and thoughtful. Do not hurry to hire for your operations the first person that you run across, but don't be preconceived about everyone you meet. To be careful in such a complex situation is natural, and your aspiration to receive additional information should not repel normal people. On the contrary—it may develop a more serious attitude toward your words. And once again, be extremely critical (but in your mind, not verbally) concerning everything you hear.

Chechnya

General Information

Chechnya declared its independence from Russia in 1991, and since November 1994, became the battleground of the deadliest war in the post-Soviet states. The war formally ended in the fall of 1996, when an agreement was signed between the Russian Federal Authorities and the Chechen resistance leadership that provided for the withdrawal of all federal troops from Chechnya, presidential and parliamentary elections in the Chechen republic in the near future, and an "uncertainty period" for five years during which a final decision on the political status of Chechnya must be reached. However, the internal situation in Chechnya remains extremely difficult. While there is no strong civil authority in today's Chechnya, the Republic is in the midst of a criminal crisis,

when such events as kidnappings, robberies, the taking over of people's apartments are common events. The Chechen resistance during the war could be characterized by a large level of independence of its field commanders and by the existence of uncontrolled groups. Today, unfortunately, some members of those groups, as well as others who never were part of the Chechen formations, have formed gangs engaging in criminal activities.[8] These activities are not contained within Chechnya itself and the surrounding areas suffer from them as well.

Another difficulty is that now, more than before, this violence is often directed against foreigners and representatives of various humanitarian agencies—as a group they are most vulnerable, and it is possible to extort significant money from them with minimal risk.

The most tragic event of this sort has clearly been the terrible killings of six members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Whatever was the reason for this tragic event—was it just a criminal act, a political act by those circles in or outside Chechnya that are interested in derailing the peace process, the result of a struggle between Chechen factions or whatever else—it certainly had a devastating effect on the perspectives for serious international aid to the area. However, while this event grasped public attention all around the world it is certainly not the first such act of violence against international organizations on the territory of Chechnya. The tragic disappearance of Fred Cuny and four doctors, the kidnapping of two orthodox priests working for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), the death of a IOM member, show that violence against international humanitarian organizations in Chechnya is a real threat. It is clear that even under the best possible scenario it will take a long time before the newly elected Chechen authorities will be able to put the criminal situation in Chechnya under control.

As for today, most international agencies have pulled out of Chechnya in response to the killings of the ICRC

members and it is unclear when they will return.

This tragic situation puts people and organizations that are trying to carry out constructive activities in Chechnya in a dilemma, because continuing their operations in the current environment is a great security risk. To ignore this may serve as a kind of encouragement for the continuation of violence against such organizations and people, while pulling out at this moment may significantly aggravate the already extremely difficult situation for the people of Chechnya and thus, considering the availability of weapons, the extreme deprivation of so many people, the lack of sources of sustainable income will make it even more difficult for any new leadership to take control and crackdown on crime.

One of the approaches that is being tried out by some organizations today in response to the difficulties they encounter is to continue programs aimed to help the Chechen population (mainly refugees) outside Chechnya, in the neighbouring regions. However this approach has some serious setbacks. It creates incentives for refugees to stay outside Chechnya for a longer time than is necessary, or requires them to travel back and forth. For people from the southern regions of Chechnya who are working on rebuilding their houses (the war in those areas was most devastating) it is particularly difficult to benefit from these programs. And this approach irritates the local population in the regions surrounding Chechnya (during field trips we have heard complaints both in Ingushetia and Dagestan about this). Both these republics have immense problems of their own, Ingushetia still has nearly forty thousand refugees from the Prigorodny (Suburban) district of North Ossetia who left after the conflict in 1992.

This extremely difficult situation more than ever before requires search for new approaches to the activities of various agencies, organizations and individuals, who would like to have a constructive impact on the development of the situation in Chechnya. We, therefore, propose a shift in the way

different charitable and humanitarian programs are being carried out. We suggest that:

- There be a shift from emergency relief to programs which assist in the rebuilding of a sustainable economy.
- There be a shift from fairly large programs managed by permanent international staff to a larger number of smaller programs carried out mainly by local people and organizations.
- Various international agencies cooperate in developing a basic infrastructure for their operations and, what is more important, for the successful work of local organizations. First of all that would mean opening opportunities for cheap and fast communications available for small local based NGOs.

If such changes in approaches take place they will significantly reduce the risks that representatives of various organizations expose themselves to when they set up offices and place staff in Chechnya on a long term basis. Certainly this approach will require regular field trips to the area to supervise and monitor the implementation of various projects. However, it is possible to further reduce the risks, and significantly lower the costs if some of the monitoring job could be carried out by human rights and other organizations that will continue their visits to Chechnya anyway.

Problems with Communication

If we want to successfully and regularly communicate with an NGO, not to mention carrying out any joint programs, we must achieve the following:

1) Provide the means to communicate regularly.
2) Initiate contacts.
3) Generate interest for continuous communication and information exchange.
4) Assist in developing perspectives for future programs and actions and in allocating necessary resources.
5) Encourage continuous follow-up on the implementation of the agreements made and plans designed.

So far there are no regular phone lines operating in Chechnya. Satellite phones

are the most reliable way to communicate but their costs are high. As for cellular phones, there is a company that provides such a service in Grozny, but so far they have set up only one transmission cell, so the phones are operable in Grozny and the nearest villages in about a 15 mile radius. In other places extra equipment must be set up, for example, in the Chechen town of Sernovodsk it is possible to set up an antenna that will make it possible to establish communications through a cellular phone service in the Ingush city of Karabulak about 20 miles away.

It is important to understand that making communications available at some location does not solve the communication problems in itself. However it is certainly a precondition to every successful cooperative project, so this objective should certainly come first.

In order to achieve this objective it seems possible to support and promote some of the Chechen based NGOs to focus precisely on providing communication to other NGOs and activists in the area and to encourage them to communicate more actively with organizations outside Chechnya.

As a first step it is important to organize a few centres where NGOs and activists could use email in order to communicate. Because most people don't have any experience with email it requires finding or training people who could take upon themselves the task of typing messages into a computer and managing the email communications for the others. If email servers will be opened in the near future (so far there is a slight possibility of that and only if the overall situation will slowly improve) it would be possible to simply cover the costs of their services for certain local NGOs and groups. It is also possible to prepare brief information leaflets on "how NGOs can communicate" that could be distributed through the current Chechen authorities who are responsible for registering NGOs as well as through the local press.

However it is important to understand that written communication is generally not an element of common culture in post-Soviet states. People,

unlike in the Western states, are not used to relying on letters for communication between themselves and especially in business communications. Nor are they used to writing proposals or developing precise work plans. That is why it is important to allocate people who will focus on helping others to formulate their ideas and plans into a form that will be acceptable for international organizations and Western foundations. These same people would also be able to assist others by distributing information materials about international organizations and foundations.

Technical assistance, training and financial support for such liaison organizations could be provided by international organizations, agencies and foundations.

Technically speaking every such "communication group" would need the following:

- A staff of 2–3 people including at least one person who understands computers and communications (Projected cost: $8,000–12,000 per year).
- A computer, printer, modem (Projected cost $2,000).
- Technical means for communication—cellular phone or a microwave link to a communication centre (Projected cost for first year of operation $7,000, less for following years).
- A car to be able to travel and communicate with various organizations in different locations (Projected cost $3,000).
- Finances to cover operating costs, i.e. various bills, gasoline, repairs, etc. (Projected cost $2,400).

The total cost of such a project will amount to somewhere around $24,000 to $28,000 a year (not including training, preparing materials for distribution and other expenses that can be included in the operating costs or considered contributions from other organizations). It would be best to organize three such points—one in Western Chechnya covering such areas as Sernovodsk, Samashki, Achkhoi-Martan, Gekhi, Urus-Martan, Znamenskoe etc.; one in Grozny—for Grozny and Central Chechnya includ-

ing such towns as Atogi, Tolstoi Yurt, etc. and one in Gudermes or Shali for Eastern Chechnya.

On the part of international organizations, developing such a communication network through local organizations will require active and regular sharing of experience and information about plans and projects and about local organizations involved in them.

Developing such a program requires a significant investment but in the long run it may be very effective and save far greater resources as it will allow to replacement of some costly field trips with a system of regular monitoring of the activities of the NGO sector in Chechnya. It is also important to consider that when there is a constant struggle for resources it may be difficult to get information from some NGOs about others, especially if those others are seen as possible competitors for funds. That is why it is important to have organizations whose main objective is precisely gathering information and assisting communications with such groups and therefore are not themselves afraid of being left behind in the struggle for resources.

There are obviously setbacks to such an approach as well. First of all it is extremely important to have reliable, well-trained and honest people involved in such projects. In a situation when most international organizations have pulled out, their role becomes very important.

From Emergency Relief to Support for Long-Term Programs and Economic Reconstruction

Today the chances for a peaceful settlement of the Chechen crisis are higher than ever since the beginning of the war, though they are still far from being definite. Immediate humanitarian needs in Chechnya remain immense.

However today's situation, which can be characterized as "a chance for peace" requires new approaches, such that would create a "peace dividend" for the population and help people to

return to peaceful life. These could be such actions as:

- helping to set up small enterprises, especially those that would bring immediate benefits to the population; and
- assisting local initiatives, aimed at dealing with the legacy of the war such as setting up orphanages, rendering psychological support to people who lost their family members, etc.

What programs of this type could be carried out in today's Chechnya? One area that seems to be a good place to focus such efforts on is the food industry. Obviously, food is the number one human need. So far hunger has not been an extremely serious problem in Chechnya only because of the high level of cooperation and strong family ties in the Chechen society.[9] However cooperation does not solve the problem when there is a general lack of resources for human life. Agriculture in Chechnya was in a poor state before the war and by today it has been devastated. Many fields remain unavailable for agriculture because of land mines. And, where there still is agricultural production, there often is a lack of equipment for food processing. That is certainly an area that needs support. One of the practical ways of helping would be setting up fairly small mills in areas where people still produce grain, but are not able to grind it. In places where old state and collective farms remain, they often simply hand over whatever they produce to the people. For example in the Chechen city of Sernovodsk practically each family has its own reserve of grain. Setting up a chain of mills in such locations would benefit the population in many ways.

First of all it will make flour much cheaper for the people. Today people need to travel twenty to fifty kilometres or more to grind their grain. This is expensive and often too expensive for many. Plus that, the existing facilities are not large enough and people need to stand in long lines, signing up a month or so in advance, to get their grain processed. Buying bread is even more expensive, a loaf costs about 2,000 ru-

bles—about U.S. $0.35 and many don't have the money for that. People can prepare their own traditional bread, as well as other foods out of flour if they have it. This is why a set of mills will improve the food situation for those in greatest need. Right now such a project is being investigated for Sernovodsk, a town on the western border of Chechnya, which the federal forces attacked in March of 1996. During that time the village suffered significant damage. Today it could be considered one of the fairly safe areas in the Chechen republic. If the project of setting up the mill in Sernovodsk will be successful, it will also benefit the nearby village of Samashki, which twice during the war suffered devastating military operations in which hundreds of people were killed. The mill project for Sernovodsk could also serve as an example of how such operations can be managed through local NGOs[10] and therefore it has a good chance of becoming the first link in a chain of similar projects throughout Chechnya. Mills are obviously not the only small enterprises in the food industry that could be effective ways to support small business.

Other programs could include supplying bakeries or, for example, supplying the equipment necessary to bottle mineral waters, which Chechnya has. Some of these waters are known to have a very good effect in the treatment of certain illnesses and they could be exported to areas outside Chechnya.[11]

Another area where it seems possible to assist small enterprises in Chechnya is the construction industry. Hundreds of thousands of people had their homes destroyed or seriously damaged during the war. In the southern areas there are villages that were literally flattened. Today people are trying to pull their lives back together, rebuild and repair what was destroyed. There is a great need for a construction industry especially for small factories, which could produce bricks and other building materials. However, this requires larger investments than similar small business projects in the food industry and it is important to be extremely careful in implementing any such programs.

One thing that is important to clearly understand, is that neither today nor in the foreseeable future will there be any guarantees for the return of investments in Chechnya.[12] The best approach is to consider any assistance program for Chechnya as charity, and if it happens to be possible to get a return—well, all the better for you.

Who Are Your Partners?

Since the main goal of this paper is to give specific information about NGOs in the Northeast Caucasus, we will provide information about different Chechen NGOs and activists. It is important to understand that this information is far from complete. In fact, a complete list of NGOs, activists and various civil initiatives does not physically exist. The situation in Chechnya is changing so rapidly that an attempt to provide a full descriptive analyses of these various groups and peoples is almost impossible.

However, there are groups and organizations that we got to know and to cooperate with during our many visits to Chechnya (since August 1994). Where possible we tried to indicate perspective programs for each organization we were in contact with, and define the most immediate needs for the organization's development.

One thing has to be kept in mind—the reliability of mail to Chechnya is slightly greater than to Mars. Looking up a house in Grozny according to its street address is often possible, but sometimes you may have problems finding the proper street when half of the houses that once lined it have ceased to exist. Inhabitants of the city also prefer not to use the official street addresses but nicknames of the city's districts, which often have no relevance to signs on the map.[13] If you are asking directions in a village you never hear the street address at all (I actually suspect that many people simply don't know their own street address). But you get good directions like, "You go through the central market (which may be a couple of miles long) then take the road on your right, when it turns left you see a school on the right

side, take the lane opposite it and turn the corner two houses after the broken tractor—or just ask anyone for me."

Nongovernmental Organizations and Activists in Chechnya

Society "For Peace and Human Rights"

Headed by Shaman Adaev (Shaman Adaev , Leila Tsoroeva, and Andre Kamenshikov).
Address: Chechen Republic, Sernovodsk, Sovetskaya Street, house 51.

Information

Shaman Adaev, the organizer of this group, is a young Chechen who from the beginning of the war was involved in helping correspondents and human rights workers gather objective information about the events in Chechnya. Many Russian and international correspondents, human rights and humanitarian workers, members of the Human Rights Centre "Memorial" and of Sergei Kovalev's Commission on Human Rights, deputies of the Russian State Duma and many others have used the help of Shaman during their work in Chechnya. At certain times during the war, Shaman's family house in Sernovodsk practically turned into a press Centre from which came a large share of the news about the Chechen war. Besides that, Shaman himself did extensive work on gathering information about human rights abuses during military operations in Sernovodsk (his family's house was damaged in those events) and neighbouring Samashki He has helped other local activists begin their work. He distributed humanitarian aid and money received from different international organizations to the families in his village who suffered the most.

Perspectives

Shaman and his family can certainly be considered key people for various charitable and humanitarian operations in Chechnya. However the society "For Peace and Human Rights" seems to be the most suitable NGO for two specific projects—setting up a mill, as one of the first programs aimed to rebuild small enterprises and organizing a Centre for communications with nongovernmental organizations of Chechnya and Ingushetia.

The location of Sernovodsk allows one to establish phone communication via the transmission centre in the Ingush town of Karabulak, about 15 miles away. If that is done, email is no problem—Shaman already has a computer and a modem and is computer literate.

Another requirement is a newer car— the one that is being used now is totally unreliable.

With the extensive contacts of Shaman and his family both among Chechen and Ingush organizations[14] as well as among Russian and international human rights activists and journalists, his society is in a unique position to become a communication centre with other Chechen and Ingush NGOs.

Chechen Branch of the Women's Committee of the North Caucasus (Also—Chechen Branch of the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development)

Address: Chechen Republic, Grozny, Staropromyslovskoe Shosse (Zavety Ilicha Street), house no. 129, apt. 43 ("Gorodok Mayakovskogo").

Information

This organization is the Chechen division of the organization Women's Committee of the North Caucasus that is headed by Svetlana Umarovna Alieva. She is a writer that focused on studying and highlighting the tragic stories of Stalin's deportations of various ethnic groups. The organization in Chechnya is headed by Zainap Gashaeva and consists of four Chechen women.

The main objective of the group when it was organized in the beginning of 1995, was to document and expose facts of serious human rights violations committed by the federal forces in the process of the Chechen conflict. The group was mainly supported by the Moscow based Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development, which was organized by two representatives of the British Quakers—Chris Hunter and Patricia Cockrell. This group gathered extensive video material during the war (over 100 videocassettes and many photographs). Members of the group went on many speaking tours to Western countries[15] where they presented information on the Chechen war and lobbied international organizations to put pressure on the Russian government to end the hostilities. They participated in various antiwar actions like the Women's March in the Spring of 1995 and many demonstrations and pickets both in Chechnya and in Moscow. They distributed small quantities of humanitarian aid (warm clothes) received from Oxfam and from Saudi Arabia.

Recently the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development opened a branch in Chechnya at the above address. The contact people for it are Zainap Gashaeva and Adlan Adaev. The actual office is located at the "Orgtehnica" club near the factory of Electrical appliances—also on the Staropromyslovskoe Shosse in an area that is called Katayama.

Perspectives

Today the group is in the process of re-adjusting and finding its place in the post-war situation. It is at present involved in the serious project of setting up a centre for rehabilitation of children in Chechnya, initiated by Chris Hunter. However, while this may require the participation of the group in solving logistic and organizational questions, it seems best that the actual management of the project be handled by the teachers and doctors of the former children's sanitorium that is the projected location of the rehabilitation centre. As for the group, the best option seems to be work on programs which involve preparing lists of the people and families who suffered especially severe hardships as a result of the war, who lost their family members, etc., and rendering psychological and some humanitarian aid to these people and families (this aspect of work was one of the ini-

tiatives of the group itself, and the members of the group have already done some work in this direction). In order to work further on this the group needs money for salaries and for transportation around Chechnya, a computer and some training in using it to set up a database, as well as in accounting skills.

Public Organization "Chechen Mothers"

Headed by Madina Magomadova.
Address: Chechen Republic, 364000 Grozny, Zavety Ilyicha Street, house 187, apt. 36.
Contact in Moscow—through the Committee of Soldiers Mothers of Russia, 103982 Moscow, Russia, Louchnikov Lane, h.4 entrance 3, room 32.

Information

Since January 18th 1995, Madina Magomadova has travelled to Grozny in an attempt to find her brother, who disappeared at the beginning of the war. She has not been successful in this task, but in the process has met many other women—from Chechnya and mothers of soldiers from different areas of Russia, who were in a situation similar to hers. So she began advocating on the part of these people, writing letters of inquiry to various official institutions of the Russian Federation (often with the help of deputies of the Russian State Duma). Since the summer of 1995 Madina became a member of the Commission for the search for missing people which functions under the auspices of the OSCE mission in Chechnya.

Today, besides the Committee of soldiers mothers of Russia, Madina is co-operating with the organization "Lawyers without Borders." In the process of her work, Madina was able to find nearly 50 Russian servicemen who were taken as prisoners of war by the Chechens and negotiate the release of many of them. In some cases these were soldiers officially pronounced dead by their military commanders. In finding Chechens, Madina had less success—she was able to find only bodies of people who were killed in the course of the war. It has often been hard to identify these corpses.

Perspectives

At this point, though the war has been declared over, many hundreds of both federal servicemen and Chechen fighters who were captured during the fighting still cannot return to their homes. An agreement was reached and included in the peace accord that all people "forcibly held" by both sides will be released on the basis of "all for all" without any preconditions, but in reality the process of their release is taking place very slowly and with great difficulties. Madina is convinced that many Chechens, who were detained by the federal troops during the war, have since been given sentences on various criminal charges. That is due to the fact that according to the official Russian position there was no war in Chechnya but simply a police operation to restore constitutional order. So legally, there cannot be any prisoners of war. Today it is very hard to locate the Chechens who were sent to different penitentiary facilities all around Russia and therefore are not in the hands of the military commanders who, according to the agreements, are formally responsible for their release.

On the Chechen side, there also are great difficulties in finding the Russian prisoners. Some of them are located in official prisoner camps, others are held by separate families, which demand that they will exchange the prisoner only for their own missing relative. Often money is demanded as well. Another serious problem is the continuing hostage taking crisis in Chechnya when both Chechens and people from other areas (for example, builders from other regions who were working in Chechnya) are kidnapped for various demands, usually—financial. All of this creates a great need for the kind of work Madina Magomadova is involved in. Unfortunately, it does not seem necessary for her group to search for new kinds of activities in the current situation—today's situation in Chechnya suggests that their work will be required for a long time to come. What she does need is some financial and technical assistance for her work—money to travel, a computer, money to pay a secretary, etc.

Republican Child Creativity Centre

Address: Chechen Republic, Grozny, Krasnoznamennaya Street 10.

Information

Unlike many other groups that were created recently as people's response to the hardships they experienced during the war, the Child Creativity Centre is an old organization staffed by people who used to work in the former "Children's Palace" (or the "Pioneer Palace") which was the centre for children's extra-curriculum activities (dancing, painting, sewing etc.). The old three-story building of the Palace which was one of the nicest buildings in Grozny was seriously damaged during the war and needs a major repair job before it may operate. Today the Centre has a few rooms in what formerly was a nursery school and it also uses the facilities of a nearby school.

Today the Centre for Child Creativity is, if not the only, certainly the largest NGO, that is working with the minds and spirits of children who lived through a war.

Taking into account today's Chechen realities this work is hard to overestimate. What is most remarkable is that the work of this organization has continued throughout the past two years—except for two interruptions caused by the fighting in Grozny. Of course, the scale of activity has dropped drastically compared to what it was before the war. Of nearly 250 clubs and sections where almost 3,000 children participated, today about 20 clubs are left, attracting about 400 children. But the Centre continues to function and not only helps the children that attend its programs, but is producing methodological papers on how to organize similar activities, to be distributed among schools and child centres in other districts of Chechnya.

The people working in the Centre are especially proud of the children ensemble "Lovzar" headed by Mr. Taklaev,

which has performed not only in Chechnya, but in other republics of the North Caucasus, Moscow, and Bulgaria as well.

"When we gathered after the fighting near our former palace and realized that we could not use it anymore"—says Janna, the head of the Centre—"our children began to dance right in the street." People around were surprised. They had not seen dancing for many months and could not understand why we should be dancing in the middle of a destroyed city. But with our dance we've shown, that life goes on, that our spirit is not broken and we will live and continue to do what we've been doing no matter what."

Perspectives and Needs

The Child Creativity Centre has proven its potential not only to survive, against all odds, but to grow, now that the war is over. The need for the kind of work it does is tremendous. Any help will mean a lot for bringing the children of Chechnya back to a peaceful life.

The Centre needs help in repairing a hall for the children to rehearse and perform in, suites for children's clubs, money for travel (the Centre tries to organize summer vacations for the children in other regions), and much, much more. One relatively inexpensive way to help would be to supply a photocopy machine to be used for producing materials to be distributed among schools and centres for extracurricular activities around Chechnya.

Another way to help the Centre for Child creativity could be to develop some fund-raising programs in cooperation with it—such as producing postcards with the pictures children draw, or organize fund-raising tours with performances by the children's ensemble.

Council for Religious and Confessional Affairs of the Chechen Republic

Headed by Sumbulatov Aguzar Alievich.
Address: Chechen Republic, Grozny, Mayakovskogo Street 86 "A," apt. 44.

Information

The Council was created before the war, during "Dudaev's regime." It has functioned throughout the events of the last years. It has two branches—Christian and Moslem. It is involved in several areas of work:

- Developing cooperation between the different religious confessions of Chechnya, propagating mutual understanding between people belonging to different religions and denominations.
- Humanitarian aid through the churches to people in greatest need.
- Restoring churches, mosques; reviving the activities of the various religious communities.
- Helping in religious education, sending people to religious educational institutions, making religious literature available for the public.
- Organizing a TV Centre and preparing programs for the local TV, creating a press-Centre.

The Council has prepared the text of an inter-confessional agreement, that includes quotations from the Bible and the Koran, proving the close relationship between Christian and Moslem religions, and voices the need for developing positive relationships between people of all denominations. The Council is cooperating with the youth movement "Djamagat," which announced its desire to protect the non-Muslim population of Chechnya from criminal activities.

Throughout the war, the Council for Religious and Confessional affairs has participated in the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid, mostly-from Churches and Church NGOs (such as "Caritas"). For example, recently the Council received ten tons of humanitarian aid, which was distributed among hospitals throughout Chechnya. The Council has assisted the work of the head of the Orthodox community in Grozny, who created a shelter for people (mainly the elderly) who lost their homes.

The Hadjiev government, when it was in power (in the first half of 1995), helped the Council with six billion rubles (about 1.2 million dollars). Most of this money was allocated to support the reconstruction of churches, mosques and other religious facilities. The Council does not have the funds to continue this work, but it is hoping to resume it when funding becomes available. Before the war, Chechnya had six churches, 420 mosques, and a few prayer houses

There are plans to organize religious lessons in the schools. People have been sent to Arab countries to get religious education. There are plans to recommend people for religious schools in Russia as well. The Council is supporting a program to create a German religious and cultural Centre. A library is being created with religious literature and many books have been distributed among the public.

The Council hopes to organize a set of TV programs, which will educate the population about various religions and confessions, and expose the common roots and principles among them. This is important to help ensure interethnic peace and cooperation in Chechnya.

Perspectives

Taking into account the wide scope of the Council's operations, it is hard to say what kind of support is not needed by it. However, in a situation in which there are limited resources, we would recommend focusing on the following:

- Supporting the media programs that the Council is ready to prepare. In today's Chechnya, with the heavy legacy of the war and uncontrolled crime, it is essential for people to hear, read and see programs that focus not on the negative, but on the positive, not on the past, but on the future. And taking into account the low level of education of the population, the spread of some rather primitive understanding of Islam.[16] It is important for people to understand that religion must not separate but unite people. (What is most needed at this point is a good video camera.)
- Some resources need to be found for a few salaries for people, working in the Council (2–3 at least). So far, most

of the work is carried out by volunteers but this cannot last forever.

- Assistance with providing a vehicle. Without one, the ability of the Council to keep in touch with people and organizations around Chechnya is very limited.
- Help in restoring the office of the Council. It is located on the "ground-floor"—basically, a basement of an apartment house and is in very poor condition.

Revival Fund of the Chechen Republic

Headed by Shamil Beno, a Chechen born in Jordan who was the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chechnya under the presidency of Djohar Dudaev.
Address: Chechen Republic, 346047 Grozny, Hankalskaya Street 78. Cellular phone: 903–30–77[17] (area code from Moscow: –8–2 from other regions of the CIS: 8096; in Moscow fax: 928–48–73).

Information

The Fund was created in the middle of May 1995 by a group of people who had already been involved in charity and humanitarian assistance, helping people who suffered during the war. The group of founders of the organization (nine people) included two bankers, specialists in construction, an economist, two scholars and a journalist. Besides humanitarian aid, members of the Fund actively participated in different peacemaking and mediating initiatives, trying to assist in putting an end to the hostilities which caused the problems in the first place (participated in monitoring negotiations on behalf of public organizations proposed strategies to improve the peace process, etc.).

In 1995 and in the beginning of 1996, the Fund assisted thirteen families with a total sum of sixty million roubles (nearly one thousand dollars). Unlike most other organizations, the Fund tries not to help many with a little, rather seriously support a few families and help them adjust to new conditions. This includes providing substantial financial aid, providing apartments, purchasing small street-shops so people could earn a living for themselves, etc.

At present the fund is looking for people that could become its trustees and support its activities. Negotiations about that were held with the head of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs A. Volski, a representative of the President of Tatarstan (the Tatar Republic) and others. These trustees would control how the help they provide is being used while the Fund will provide logistic and organizational support. The Fund is managed by the Council of the Fund. Its highest body is a Conference of the Members of the Fund. Once a year, the Fund is supposed to inform the public about who has been providing aid via the Fund, who has received this aid, etc.

Perspectives

Strong points of the Fund is its clear organizational structure, its good ties on various levels both in Arab countries and in Russia, its through control over the use of resources and its focus on substantial aid that may really help change peoples lives for the better.

At this point the Fund focuses on the following programs:

- Creating an orphanage. There are plans to open an orphanage for about 250 children that lost their parents during the war. A place has been located for it in the Staraya Sunja village and there is an agreement with the local administration. Agreements have been reached with Jordanian organizations and the Mufti of Chechnya Kadyrov.
- Registering people who got injured during the war. The Fund cooperates in this task with the Islamic World Council on Disability and Rehabilitation that will accumulate the information gathered and agreed to finance the project. The work will be carried out with the cooperation of the societies of the disabled in the various districts of Grozny and Chechnya, the local administrations, etc.
- Humanitarian assistance during the winter. A preliminary agreement about this was reached with the Egyptian Embassy. Egyptian representatives distribute the aid, while

the Fund will collect information about the people in most need, provide transportation, take responsibility for security, etc.

- Creating an ophthalmological clinic in Grozny, Realizing how expensive it is to send people to get medical treatment abroad, the Fund is trying to support the creation of medical centres in Chechnya.

The Revival Fund of the Chechen Republic also seems to be a good organization to approach with various projects aimed to set up small businesses and enterprises. Of the most important needs the Fund needs two trucks: one small one (around 1.5 tons) for use in the city, and a larger one for delivering significant quantities of humanitarian aid to different locations in Chechnya.[18]

Centre for Protection of Rights and Culture

Headed by Elhanov Islamjan Israilovich.
Address: Chechen Republic, Grozny, Michurina Street 105.

Information

The Centre for Protecting Rights and culture was registered in September of 1995 (The work actually began in the first months of 1995). The Centre was organized by three people known in the Republic—Islamjan himself, Said-Magomed Hasiev, Bisultanov Apti. The focus was to protect both human rights and Chechnya's cultural institutions, which have suffered great damage during the war. At present there are two major programs being carried out:

- "Victims of the war"—includes preparing lists of victims of the fighting in Chechnya. A questionnaire was developed for this purpose. The Centre also plans to gather information about human rights violation during the war, about "missing" people, and attempts to trace them, etc. At this point the Centre has a list of around one thousand people, mainly Chechens who were arrested during the war.
- "Reviving cultural life." This is seen as the main focus of the Centre. Dur-

ing the fighting archives were burned, libraries and monuments destroyed etc.

Right now there are attempts to restore a library. The Centre was able to negotiate an agreement that 100,000 books will be sent to Chechnya.

Perspectives

The Centre for Protection of Rights and Culture is a rare example (perhaps the only one so far) of a Chechen organization that was able to formally apply and receive a sizeable grant (over $50,000) from the Moscow-based Open Society Institute. The main purpose of that grant is to support the "Victims of war" program. The Centre also may need help in creating a computer database for holding and using this information.

Plans for Organising an Orphanage in Achkhoi-Martan for Chechen Refugees

Contact: Vaha Zavliev, in Achhoi-Martan, and ask for directions.

Information[19]

Five years ago there was a facility in Achkhoi-Martan for children who either lost their parents or for various reasons couldn't live with them. Only one school functions on its territory. During the last four years an enthusiastic person from the local community has been developing plans to revive this facility. He wants to unite in one complex the former orphanage, the building of a former teacher's training school and two children's camps (former pioneer camps) near the town. He believes that this facility could hold up to 3,500 children of the ages from six to seventeen. Besides places to live and study the facility would also include a farm where the children could work and produce agricultural products to feed themselves. However, more or less serious repairs must be done on all the buildings of the selected facilities before they can operate.

Psychological and Security Aspects of Work in Chechnya

In the process of preparing and carrying out various humanitarian projects, con-sidering the high security risks in today's Chechnya, it is helpful to focus on towns and villages where these risks are significantly less than in other areas or in Grozny. Today no place is safe but the security situation varies a great deal from place to place. It is generally worse in the cities and differs a lot in other areas. Another area which poses a great risk to visitors is the southeast of Chechnya. In any case, before starting any serious program it is important to get the approval of both the central authorities in Grozny, the local administration and field commanders. Negotiating this may require some skills. On the one hand it is important to generate some interest in the work you or your organization is proposing and to show what benefits that would bring to the area. On the other hand, however, it is important to be very careful in "opening up your cards." Large projects, especially if they require significant investments (in Chechnya $5,000 is already a big sum) may attract a lot of unhealthy interest. People in official or unofficial power positions may try to control the projects or use them for their own benefit. Certain compromises on this are often inevitable, taking into account the complexity of the situation, but they should not become a serious burden to the project itself. One technique, that may be used sometimes (but not always) to overcome such obstacles is to allow an idea of something what would be good "in principle" to float around for some time in the selected community, thus forming a positive public opinion, before it is formulated into a concrete proposal. This is easiest to achieve when already cooperating with a local NGO or activist. Remember however, that there is no one set of universal guidelines, and what is right for one project and one location may be absolutely counterproductive in another case.

As it was already mentioned, suspicion of anyone from the outside is always very high in a conflict zone. Chechnya however, seems to beat all the records in this sense, with a very strong and broad "spy-mania." (For example: during the war if you happened to hang around a certain location not long before it was bombed or shelled—you had all the chances to be considered a "fire corrector.")

It is typical for any foreigner to hear remarks every now and then about possibly working for some secret service, as well as "jokes" on that issue, etc. In itself this is normal and though may be quite irritating, there is no reason to panic. But it is important to behave as wisely and as carefully as possible trying to give no reason for any serious suspicions. Also, when the hostilities are carried out against journalists, humanitarian workers, human rights activists Chechens often later try to justify them claiming that the victims were spies, etc. Try to avoid asking questions that are not directly related to your concerns.

And generally, be careful on your travels, avoid travelling at night. Stay in your friends' homes and try not to be alone for long especially when you are travelling. And if you do—it might be safer taking a bus than hiring a car. Russian proverb says, "God looks out for the careful."

Ingushetia

General Information

Unlike Chechnya, the small Ingush Republic is an example of significant progress achieved against serious obstacles. The Ingush Republic was established in 1992 in the territory of 4 districts of the former Chechen-Ingush autonomous Republic. The Ingush population voted overwhelmingly that year for remaining as part of the Russian Federation what was largely due to the fact that the Russian Parliament adopted a law "On rehabilitation of deported peoples, which included a promise of territorial rehabilitation."

As already mentioned the Ingush that were deported together with the Chechens to Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia have lost the Prigorodny (Suburban) district, that was part of the Ingush Republic before the deportation. After their return in 1956, that district remained part of North Ossetia whose leadership was creating difficulties for the returning Ingush. In October of 1992

a volunteer conflict erupted leaving around 700 dead and creating 70,000 refuges, most of them Ingush people from the Prigorodny district. So far less than half of those were able to return. Ingushetia also suffered greatly from the Chechen war right on its eastern border. At times it received over 160,000 refugees from Chechnya. In fact some of the first victims of the war were a few Ingush men that protested as the federal troops were moving towards Chechnya through Ingushetia.

Yet, despite all these hardships, the Ingush Republic may serve as a positive example of progress achieved against great odds. The leadership of the Republic, headed by a former Soviet Army General Ruslan Aushev was able to negotiate with the federal government a set of economic conditions. Under them most Ingush businesses are practically tax-exempt. More than that, many Russian businesses were registered in Ingushetia for a small fee, which allowed them to drastically reduce their taxes. As a result, at a time when in nearly all regions of Russia the economy was declining, Ingushetia developed at a fairly high pace. Someone who could observe the extremely poor situation in the Republic just a few years ago would be pleasantly surprised with all the new construction that has been and is going on today.

Another factor that contributed to the significant progress, achieved by Ingushetia is the success of the Ingush leadership in attracting significant international aid. Indirectly, during the last years, this was also a result of the poor security situation in neighbouring Chechnya, what caused many international organizations attracted by the Chechen crisis to operate in and from Ingushetia. The Ingush Republic did not only receive aid and assistance from various international organization and agencies for its own purposes, but became a major point of support for Chechnya, especially for the Chechens who became refugees in the territory of Ingushetia.

However, all this must not overshadow the fact that Ingushetia is still a tiny republic with a weak economy and

a huge amount of refugees, caught between to conflicts.

As already mentioned, one of the effects that conflicts and crises have is that they encourage people to take their well-being into their own hands, thus increasing the civil activities of the population. This clearly has been the case in Ingushetia.

Despite the small population of the Republic, there were many more working NGOs created "per capita" in Ingushetia, than in other "quiet" regions.[20] Obviously the most important problem that these groups had to deal with was the well-being of tens of thousands of refugees from the Prigorodny region, and over a hundred thousand refugees from the Chechen war.

Nongovernmental Organizations of the Ingush Republic

Ingush Red Crescent Society

Headed by Liza Amarhadjieva.
Address: Recently Red Crescent Society moved to another address and since they still have no telephone connection installed, we cannot obtain the information about their address. We recommend getting the address from the International Red Cross office.

Information

The Ingush Red Crescent Society is a unique organization compared with other NGOs by the scale of its operations and the number of people it was able to assist. It was set up in 1992, soon after the tragic Ossetian-Ingush conflict. Since then it was able to help directly a few hundred thousand people most of them—many times.[21] In addition to this, the Ingush Red Crescent Society assisted the operations carried out by other organizations and relief agencies. All this aid was directed to help refugees—both from the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia and from Chechnya. The society also helped organize medical centres at locations along the Chechen border when the fighting in the border areas intensified and just recently the Red Crescent Society began a program to help the "so-

cially unprotected" people from Ingushetia itself.

The Red Crescent Society has nine permanent and thirty-five part-time employees. Most of the part-time employees are representatives of the organization in various locations responsible for preparing lists of the families and people who are in greatest need and for organizing the distribution of aid to them.

The organization keeps track of all recipients and has a computerized database where it collects information. This information includes the number of people in the family that is receiving aid, the number of children, the group the recipients belong to (widows, orphans, disabled, single over the age of 65 and others) the area the family originated from, its present address, etc.

Recently the Red Crescent Society began to implement a program of aid for elderly people at home. The society is also prepared to organize urgent response to new crisis situations like the one that developed during the fighting in Grozny in August 1996.

Needs and Perspectives

The Ingush Red Crescent society is probably the best organization to channel direct humanitarian aid to the population. It also has huge experience cooperating with various international organizations and relief agencies (ICRC, Oxfam, World Vision, etc.).

What the society needs for its further development is the capabilities and the skills to communicate directly with various potential donors. For this the best thing would be to use email, but there are no email servers in Ingushetia. The main problem is ensuring a good telephone connection with some service that provides access to the Internet. Right now the possibility to do this is being discussed. Installing a cellular phone at this moment seems to be the cheapest solution to this problem. It will require around $12–15,000. This email service, if it is set up, could also be accessible for other NGOs in Ingushetia. The society also needs finances to extend its storage facilities and to increase the

salaries for the part time staff in various locations.

Committee of Ingush Women "Almos"

Headed by Leila Muratovna Tsoroeva. **Address:** Ingush Republic, 366720 Nazran, Kartaeva Street, tel.: (81) 237-16, 242-02.

Information

The Committee of Ingush women was registered on the 2 of March 1993, soon after the first presidential elections in the newly created Ingush Republic. The main objective of the organization is human rights protection. The Committee is involved in the following activities:

- Protecting the rights of Ingush soldiers, drafted to the Russian Army.
- Helping in the search for Russian military servicemen "lost" in the course of the Chechen war.
- Advocating on behalf of Ingush people who have been detained or brought to court in the neighbouring regions (mainly in the territory of the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions).
- Maintaining an archive of materials (information, photos, etc.) of people who have been killed or "missing" after the tragic events in the Prigorodny district in 1992.
- Lobbying in front of authorities on behalf of the "socially unprotected" people (single mothers, elderly people, widows, etc.). The committee helps such people to prepare various requests, appeals and other documents and to bring them to the attention of the official authorities.

There are five people working in the organization on a volunteer basis. Many others also participate in the activities of the Committee. For example: some lawyers, like the chairman of the Ingush Lawyers Committee Tamara Hautieva, together with women's "support groups" travel to other regions to participate in trials, where Ingush are involved.

After the beginning of the Chechen war, the Committee began to actively cooperate with Soldier's Mother's Committees all around Russia. The Ingush women's committee helps them find their children in Chechnya, bring them out—including cases when soldiers were taken as prisoners by the Chechen fighters. At the same time Soldiers Mothers Committees around Russia help in monitoring the conditions of Ingush soldiers in different Russian military locations and in defending their rights.

The Committee has participated in many antiwar activities since the beginning of the Chechen conflict. In June 1996, it has organized women to meet with the Russian and the Chechen delegations during negotiations in Nazran and hand over to them a petition with some specific proposals on how to stop the war.

The organization does not have a permanent office and is often forced to move. Nor does it have any serious financial backing.

Needs and Perspectives

The Women's Committee of Ingushetia over the past years has proved its effectiveness in many areas of human rights protection. At this point it needs at least some financial backing to be able to continue and expand its operations. It is most important to solve the problem of getting a permanent office and the necessary equipment for it. The second problem to work on is establishing communications. Third—to get a car in order to be able to work more effectively both in Ingushetia and Chechnya. And last but not least—at least some of the people working in the organization need to receive some salary, because there is a limit to how long people can work as volunteer.

In order to achieve all these objectives members of the Women's Committee of Ingushetia need some assistance and training in writing proposals, using computers and other skills that are important for their work.[22] In solving the task of developing and maintaining communications it would be best to cooperate with other Ingush NGOs, including the Red Crescent Society.

Council of Social Organizations of the Ingush Republic

Headed by Chairman, R. Buzurtanov; coordinator L. Tsoroeva.

Address: Ingush Republic, 366720 Nazran, Chechen Street 5, fax: 9234066 (Moscow number in Ingushetia).

Information

The Council of Social Organizations of the Ingush Republic was organized in February 1995 with the purpose of developing communication and coordinating efforts between different Ingush NGOs. It consists of 12 separate groups. Some others are considering the possibility of becoming its members.

Most of the work of the Council has been related to the tragic events in Chechnya and in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia. It lobbied on behalf of the forced migrants from the Prigorodny Region, organized and participated in many actions opposing the war in Chechnya, participated in the negotiation process on different levels between North Ossetia and Ingushetia, took part in various press conferences, etc.

Recently it prepared and sent a grant application to the Open Society Institute requesting $10,000 for a program aimed to help legal education in Ingushetia, monitoring the human rights situation in relation to refugees and publishing a newsletter.

Perspectives

The task of uniting efforts of various NGOs is certainly very important and must be encouraged. Also, the Council of Social Organizations of the Ingush Republic seems to be a good organization to focus on solving the communications problem for Ingush NGOs. Perhaps it could unite its efforts on this issue with the Red Crescent society. It is also an organization that may assist NGOs and organizations from other regions and countries in finding partners for their programs in the Ingush Republic.

List of NGOs, Members of the Council of Social Organizations of the Ingush Republic

Women's Committee of Ingushetia "Almos"
Union of Veterans of World War II

Union of Veterans of Afghanistan of the Ingush Republic

Chernobyl Union of the Ingush Republic

Union of Cossack Formations of the Ingush Republic

Union of the Deported from North Ossetia

Charitable Fund for Social Protection of Motherhood and Childhood

Committee for the Search for Hostages and "Missing"

Actors Union of the Ingush Republic

Artists Union of the Ingush Republic

Federation of Child and Teenager organizations of the Ingush Republic

Youth Ecological Organization "ECOS"

A new organization that is not located in Ingushetia but whose operations are mostly focused on the Ingush Republic is:

Association for the Protection of Deported Peoples

Address: Moscow at 129110 Moscow, Gilyarovskogo Street 39, office 800, tel./fax: (095) 971–28–27, email: isp@jnvluk.msk.ru

Information

It plans to be an all-Russian organization but so far most of its activities were related to Ingushetia. Unlike other NGOs this is a wealthy organization (its Chairman, Muharbek Aushev, is one of the directors of the largest Russian oil company). Its declared goals are:

• networking between various deported peoples support organizations;

• developing a complex Program for the liquidation of the consequences which result from interethnic conflicts, based upon the experience of the Ingush-Ossetian conflict;

• organizing and participating in conferences and seminars, related to the problem of deported peoples protection;

• developing projects, which will help to create new jobs in the Ingush Republic;

• assisting in solving the housing problem for refugees and displaced persons; and

• rehabilitation programs for children who suffered during the Chechen war.

This organization has already delivered humanitarian help and equipment to hospitals, orphanages and the Ingush State University. The organization itself and its activities seem to be interesting, but so far we have not had any working experience with them.

Dagestan

General Information

The republic Dagestan is a subject of the Russian Federation, it consists of 42 administrative districts.[23] Its capital is Mahachkala. On the south, Dagestan borders with Azerbaijan, on the southwest with Georgia, on the west with Chechnya, on the northwest with the Stavropol Region, on the north with Kalmykia. The southern part of the Republic is covered with the foothills and the mountains of the Main Caucasus Range, and on the east it stretches along the Caspian sea.

In the year 1813, according to the Gylistan treaty the territory of modern Dagestan was attached to Russia. In 1817, the mountain peoples of Dagestan began an anticolonial campaign referred to as the Caucasian war. It lasted till 1864, when it was finally suppressed by the Russian Empire. On January 20, 1921 after a two-year war with German and Turkish forces and the "White Guard" the Dagestan Autonomous Republic was formed as part of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic (RSFSR).

According to the census of 1989, the population of Dagestan amounted to 1,802,188 people. According to the data in 1995 the population increased to 2,066,657 among which there were representatives of 102 nationalities. The largest ethnic groups were the Avar, Agul, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Chechen,[24] Dargin, Kumyk, Lak, Lezgin, Nogai, Russian, Rutul, Tabasaran, Tatar, Tsahur, Ukrainian.

The languages of the various ethnic groups in Dagestan belong to three linguistic groups: the Turkish, the Indo-European, and the Iber-Caucasian language groups.

From the beginning of *perestroika* in the former USSR, many problems surfaced and began to grow rapidly, relating to national questions, divisions based on ethnic backgrounds and interethnic relations. In Dagestan, where there is such a variety of ethnic groups, interethnic tensions and contradictions developed. However, these problems did not lead to the volunteer conflicts that took place in many other regions. In Dagestan the increase in interethnic tensions was limited to the development of different national movements, various demonstrations and a few separate incidents that did not develop into a serious conflict. But there are many cases when people who found themselves in a relatively more vulnerable position suffered from criminal activity, while authorities were unable, or too passive to protect them and the general public remained indifferent to their problems.

During the past several years, Dagestan was in a situation close to an economic blockade—the only railroad connecting the Republic with Russia goes through Chechnya and could not operate because of the events there. The border with Azerbaijan was closed. Dagestan is in the middle of a severe economic crisis and crime in the Republic has increased sharply (even more so then generally in Russia). All this, together with the growth of ethnic tensions, leads to a strong outflow from Dagestan of mainly the Russian and the so-called "Russian-speaking" population. At the same time a difficult economic and political situation in Russia and other NIS countries has resulted in even greater return flow of ethnic Dagestanis from other regions and countries.

The armed conflict in Chechnya and the huge flow of refugees also had a negative impact on the situation in Dagestan.

Ethnic Tensions and Contradictions in Dagestan

The ethnic diversity of Dagestan, the interconnection of cultures of the various peoples, living side by side for many centuries developed certain norms of behaviour. These norms helped avoid any major armed conflicts in Dagestan despite the fact that tensions often ran very high and serious contradictions still exist. It is possible to indicate the following most important areas of tension:

- The Novolak (former Auhovski) district—relations between the akkin-Chechens and the Lak (problems of resettlement of the formerly deported peoples).
- Tensions and problems along the Dagestani-Chechen border.
- Area populated by the Lezgin, divided by the Russian-Azerbaijani border.
- Problems of the Nogai people, divided between Dagestan, Chechnya and the Stavropol region.
- Similar problems of the Terek Cossack's, divided between Stavropol region, Chechnya and Dagestan.[25]

We shall take a look at three of these situations that we consider most important. We believe that the situations that developed in the Novolak district and along the border with Chechnya are the most urgent and explosive, and potentially may develop into open interethnic conflicts so they deserve immediate attention. The situation on the border with Azerbaijan still remains quite tense, but seems to have improved over the past years and is less likely to lead to serious problems (which does not mean that it does not deserve attention).

Novolak (Auhovski) District: Contradictions between the Lak and Akkin-Chechens

There was no Novolak district before 1944, its territory belonged to the Hasavyurt area. In 1943, part of the territory of the Hasavyurt area was designated as the Auhovski district, populated mainly by the akkin-Chechens.

In February 1944, after the deportation of all the Chechens, the Auhovski district was abolished. Instead of it the Novolak district was formed where in March of 1944, 1,300 Lak families wore moved from the Lak and Kulin districts of Dagestan.

In the process of resettling the Lak people, twenty-four villages, 1,300 families were moved to nine villages in the newly created Novolak district. People were given one wagon for three families. On the road some people died from the cold weather and malnutrition. When they came they were put in the houses left by the akkin-Chechens. Many people died during the first three years after the resettlement.[26]

In the process of deportation the property of the akkin-Chechens was left behind. All they were allowed to take were some clothes and a small amount of food. Cattle, property, houses—all of that was left behind. A large percent of the deported died in the first few years after deportation.

In 1957, after the deported peoples were allowed to return to their homelands, the akkin-Chechens returned but they were not permitted to go back to the Novolak district, formed in the place of the Auhovski district. Instead they were given about 20,000 hectares (almost 50,000 acres) of land in the nearby Hasavyurt district.

Since 1957, there were some rather serious collisions between the akkin-Chechens and the Laks and in 1991–93 contradictions between them have increased. The akkin-Chechens wanted to return to the homes of their ancestors. The Laks were not against this in principle, but they demanded that the government of Dagestan should first allocate territory and finance the construction of nine towns and villages for the Laks to move to.

On the third congress of the national deputies of Dagestan in 1991, a decision was made to create an organizing committee for the restoration of the Auhovski district and an organizing committee for the resettlement of the Lak population of the Novolak district.

A governmental program was accepted: a territory of 8,500 hectares

(21,000 acres) in the Kumtorkalinski district near Mahachkala was allocated for the new Lak towns and villages to be built and 3,150 Lak families were supposed to move there. The resettlement program for the Lak people should have been completed in 1996, but due to shortages in financing only around 20 percent of the resettlement program has been accomplished so far. Since the Laks cannot move from the Novolak district this means that the program of restoring the Auhovski district cannot be implemented. The akkin-Chechens propose to restore the Auhovski district before the Laks move out. But the Lak demand that the process of restoring the Auhovski district and the resettlement of the Laks should happen at the same time.

Tension grows, the akkin-Chechens take over lands, demand that their ancestor's houses be freed, that all the paragraphs of the law "On Rehabilitation of Deported Peoples" be fulfilled. The Laks resist the pressure from the akkin-Chechens, organize demonstrations and try to pressure the government of Dagestan.

Due to the lack of financial resources, the Russian government made a decision to change the deadline for the implementation of the resettlement program for the Lak population of the Novolak district and for the restoration of the Auhovski district till the year 2000. Thus, the work that needs to be done in order to solve the problem has nearly been brought to a halt. There are objective reasons for that, but the further the resettlement program will be delayed, the higher interethnic tensions will rise between these two peoples.

Problems and Growth of Tensions along the Chechen-Dagestan Border[27]

Most of the people in Dagestan felt compassion toward the Chechen people during the war in Chechnya. Many considered this war to be a national liberation movement of the Chechen people[28] From the first days of the war the Dagestan population actively participated in an antiwar movement,[29] people demonstrated, blocked roads and

did not allow the federal troops to enter Chechnya from Dagestan.

The government and people of Dagestan did what they could to assist refugees from Chechnya. Nevertheless on January 9, 1996 the Dagestan city of Kizlyar became the object of a raid that must be qualified as a terrorist attack by a few hundred Chechen fighters, led by Salman Raduev.[30]

Early in the morning the Chechen fighters entered the city and terrorised it. They took over the city hospital with its patients and a maternity house next to it. They drove people from their homes and apartments and gathered a total of over 3,000 hostages. As a result there was the most powerful explosion of anti-Chechen feelings in Dagestan. There was a high probability of actions against the Chechens living in Dagestan as well as against the refugees from Chechnya. The interference of the Dagestan leadership made it possible to avoid a military solution in the city of Kizlyar. The fighters released most of the hostages, and about 150 of them, including members of the Dagestan leadership, agreed to leave Dagestan peacefully in a convoy of buses. But on the very border between Dagestan and Chechnya near the village of Pervomaiskoe, the convoy was stopped and surrounded by federal troops. Attempts by the Dagestan leadership to secure a peaceful solution to the crises were ignored and the Federal government took over the operation. Meanwhile the fighters took up defence positions in the village. The Federal ministry of Interior and the Federal Security Service, headed personally by ministers Kulikov and Barsukov organized an armed operation of "eliminating terrorists and freeing the hostages" that began on 15 January. The operation that was planned to be a few hours long took four days. Both sides suffered heavy losses and quite a few of the hostages were killed in it. The village was completely destroyed. On the night of January 18th, Salman Raduev was able to break through the Federal lines and with a group of fighters and hostages (who were later released) disappeared in the territory of Chechnya.

Events in Kizlyar and Pervomaiskoe have once again exposed the inability of the leadership of Russia to take care of crises, its poor understanding of the real situation on the ground and the rigid and unprofessional style of its operations. In Dagestan many people got the impression that the real intent of the Russian government was to pull Dagestan into an open military confrontation with Chechnya. The operation carried out in Pervomaiskoe was so obviously worthless and senseless that after the anti-Chechen attitudes among the population of Dagestan have begun to diminish at the expense of a growing discontent over the actions of the Federal authorities of the Russian Federation.

The Kizlyar tragedy united all the ethnic groups of Dagestan, and weakened the contradictions between them. At the same time, it lead to an increase in anti-Chechen feelings among the Dagestan population. These anti-Chechen feelings spread to the akkin-Chechens who live in Dagestan. Many people see the akkin-Chechens as proponents of Chechen separatism.

Gradually anti-Chechen feelings began to diminish but after the signing of the peace agreements in Hasavyurt on August 26, 1996, when military activities in Chechnya ended and were replaced by a fragile peace, when one should expect the situation to stabilise, anti-Chechen feelings again began to grow. Raids constantly take place from the Chechen territory onto the neighbouring Dagestan districts during which cattle and cars get stolen, robberies take place, and sometimes hostages are taken in order to extort money and so on. The representatives of all nationalities of Dagestan suffer from these criminal activities.

Another cause of tensions are the statements of various Chechen leaders that the Hasavyurt and the Novolak (Auhovski) districts are ancient Chechen territory.[31]

There is an opinion among the Dagestan peoples, that if the program for restoration of the Auhovski district will be implemented (today the Chechens demand the return of this dis-

trict and also want to maintain their lands in the Hasavyurt district)[32] these districts will de facto become a part of Chechnya, even if they formally remain part of Dagestan.

Such fears, fuelled by certain statements by Chechen leaders and constant provocations on the border, lead to the growth of anti-Chechen feelings in Dagestan. Demands were already made to create self-defence units in all regions of Dagestan bordering with Chechnya, to permit the carrying weapons, to conduct a strict account of all Chechens, living in Dagestan, including refugees from the war.

The akkin-Chechens themselves often state that in their culture, traditions, and way of life they are closer to the peoples of Dagestan than to Chechens living in Chechnya.[33] During the tragic events in Kizlyar and Pervomaiskoe the Dagestan Chechens actively participated in the search for a peaceful solution, negotiated with Salman Raduev compelling him to give up one position after another. During hostilities in Chechnya the leadership of the separatists hoped that the akkin-Chechens would support their armed struggle, but this has not taken place. Dagestan Chechens condemn provocations and robbery on the border, they understand that as soon as the patience of the Dagestan people breaks the first reaction will be against them. However nowadays, in the euphoria of their victory, many Chechens tend to identify themselves with Chechnya more than before. In general the akkin-Chechens are in a contradictory situation. On one hand they are Chechens, they have strong ties with Chechnya and are influenced from there. On the other hand they are residents of Dagestan and are under pressure from the Republican leadership and population. The leaders of the akkin-Chechens repeatedly stated their clear position that they are inhabitants of Dagestan and like all Dagestan are oriented to remain within the Russian Federation.

The leadership of Dagestan and its population are obviously satisfied with the end of the war in the neighbouring republic but in reality the long awaited

peace brought an aggravation of the situation on the Chechen-Dagestan border.

Area of Residence of the Lezgin, Divided by the Russian-Azerbaijani Border

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union the Lezgin found themselves divided by the Russian-Azerbaijani border. Similar situations developed in many areas within the post-Soviet territory: Ossetians in Russia and Georgia, Russians in Ukraine, Estonia and Kazakhstan, Armenians in Azerbaijan, Azerbaijanis in Georgia and so on. In some regions the growth of interethnic tensions lead to an open armed conflict between the ethnic minorities that refused to accept the new arrangements and the titular national groups. Contradictions between the Azerbaijanis and the Lezgin were high and some volunteer incidents took place over recent years on both sides of the border, although a large volunteer conflict did not develop. One of the major reasons for tensions was that the border between Russia and Azerbaijan was closed and relatives from both sides faced difficulties in crossing it.

In the beginning of September 1996, there was a decision made by the Russian government to ease the procedure for crossing the border. Air, railway and bus communications were opened between Dagestan and Azerbaijan. The border is completely open for the women and children as long as they can present their ID (a passport or birth certificate). Young men of "drafting" age need to present on the border a passport with their residence permit (*propiska*)[34] or a special permission document that can be easily obtained in Mahachkala.

There is a certain contradiction. For example if a representative of our organization Nonviolence International-NIS departs from Moscow to Azerbaijan he does not need to receive any special permitting documents, all he needs is his regular internal passport. If he will go to Azerbaijan from Dagestan, it will be necessary for him to receive for this a permission paper in Mahachkala. This

is clearly a double standard in the legislation.

Situation of Refugees from Chechnya

During the war in Chechnya, Dagestan received around 150,000 refugees. Taking into account, that the economic situation in Dagestan is very difficult, accepting such numbers of refugees has created additional problems due to the need to finance their housing, livelihood, etc.

The flows of refugees changed depending on the intensity of the fighting in Chechnya and the geography of military actions. When fighting intensified in one or another Chechen location the number of refugees increased and as soon as the fighting ceased many refugees went back to their homes. Many refugees did not register, especially during the first months because during the registration a form (113) was filled out which was similar to the form that was filled out during the deportation in 1944 and people were afraid of possible consequences of their registration.[35] Many refugees did not have documents. They were registered without them and in such situations employees of registration centres had the opportunity to abuse their power during the distribution of humanitarian aid. Nor are such abuses excluded on the part of the refugees themselves, when they could register at different locations under different surnames. Many refugees went to their relatives or friends. Besides, many residents of Dagestan have left for other regions of Russia and countries of the NIS to their relatives, parents, and children. As a result of all this, there is no clear statistic of refugees and in the district branches of the Committee on Labour and Employment there are data only about those refugees, who were actually registered.

Most of the refugees coming to Dagestan from Chechnya during the entire period of the war stayed in the city of Hasavyurt and the Hasavyurt district. The maximum number of refugees that came to the city was almost 65,000 and to the district—about 60,000 per-

sons. In October 1996, there were around eight thousand left in the city and seven thousand in the district. In the Novolak district, that received a total of about 14,000 people, 116 refugees were left. The Kizlyar district accepted 7,560 people and the Tarumovski district received almost fifteen hundred, of whom a nearly a thousand returned to Chechnya.

Most of the refugees stayed in the private sector. Local people felt compassion and did what they could to help. Besides that, the administration of the bordering districts found buildings for the refugees to use (schools, nurseries, educational and industrial facilities, etc.) The refugees received 2,465 rubles a day and the people or organizations that provided housing received 1,000 rubles a day.[36] But even this minimal support did not last very long, somewhere around October 1995, this financing stopped.

In this situation an important role was played by international organizations, which rendered medical services, brought and distributed medicines, food, clothes and so on. The Dagestan Ministry on Emergency situations, the Federal Migration Service have also worked actively.

At the present moment many managers of buildings, where the refugees live, want them to return to Chechnya as soon as possible. This occurs because electric power and gas are used and the costs of these services are not compensated. The refugees themselves, knowing the economic situation in Dagestan, feel uncomfortable and understand that they are a burden. But many people really have nowhere to go. When the administration of the Hasavyurt district gave the lists of refugees to the administrations of the Chechen city of Gudermes, the Nogaiyurt, Vedeno and Shali districts of Chechnya it discovered that around 70 percent of these refugees live at home in Chechnya. So there are many cases when a person lives in Chechnya at home, but receives humanitarian aid as a refugee in Dagestan.

We believe that it is important to assist the return of refugees, whose homes

remained, who have the finances and opportunities to live in Chechnya. This will decrease the number of refugees in Dagestan and it will become easier to help those who are in the most desperate situation, who lost their houses, don't have enough means for livelihood etc. For this purpose it is necessary to transfer activity of international organizations from Dagestan to Chechnya. Taking into account the risks and the difficulties of that and the reaction of international organizations to the killing of the six ICRC employees, it is possible to use potential local activists, NGOs and people who helped the operations of international organizations in Chechnya.

Migration of the Population and Its Reasons

For many decades, during existence of the USSR, migration flows were directed out of Dagestan. Since 1992, as a result of a new political situation, these flows have changed. The inflow of the population has exceeded the outflow. It is possible to follow the most important tendencies in the migration of the population in and out of Dagestan:

- Migration of the Russian and other "non Dagestanian" population from Dagestan.
- Migration of ethnic "Dagestanis" from the NIS countries and Russia into Dagestan:

Migration of the Russian and Other "Non-Dagestani" Population from Dagestan

Migration flows of the Russian and "Russian-speaking" population from Dagestan can be defined as:
- From cities and districts, where the Russian population made up a minority of the population.
- From districts, where the Russian population was traditionally the majority.

The most important reason that causes the "Russian-speaking" population to migrate can be called "social vulnerability." This population as a rule is working in plants, factories, technological enterprises, etc. As a result of

the economic crisis in the country these factories have stopped functioning. This effected the "Russian-speaking" population of Dagestan in particular. People were left without salaries and they did not have other sources of income. As the power of the federal and local government diminished and interethnic tensions increased, the Russians as the least protected found themselves under criminal pressure.[37] Russians, who often worked as qualified specialists in different enterprises were provided apartments during Soviet times. Criminal structures would take away people's apartments or force them to sell their flats for low prices. Through fraud, criminals received documents allowing them to take them over. There were some cases, when the owners of apartments were killed, or kidnapped in the process of taking their apartments over. Republican authorities did, to a certain extent, try to protect the Russian population but in a situation when the leadership itself is in crisis, the Russian and "Russian-speaking" population remains under the pressure of criminal structures in those towns and villages where it is a minority.

Another factor that forces the Russian and "Russian-speaking" population to leave is the consequences of the migration of the Dagestan peoples from the mountain areas of the Republic onto the plain. This process began in the 1970s, and was connected to the fact that life in the mountains had poor perspectives—there was a shortage of land, farms were unprofitable, there were no jobs, etc. On the plains[38] there was a shortage of labour, industrial production and cattle farming were expanding and so on.

In the Tarumovski district there was no organized migration from the mountains. Ethnic "Dagestanis" came on their own personal initiative and this was welcomed. In the Kizlyar district there was organized migration from the mountains, people were given land, whole new villages were built for the migrants, they were provided building materials, given jobs and so on. This, at the time, did not create ethnic conflict.

But because of the "tuhumstvo," the strong family ties, once a person moved to the plains and settled there, he would try to bring his parents, brothers and other relatives. At the same time the Russian youth, after competing higher education, tried to find jobs in other areas of the country. This mainly happened because for them the chances of making a successful career in Dagestan were very small. Because all that, the birth rates and the population growth of ethnic "Dagestanis" was much higher than of the Russian population.

So by the middle of the 1980s, the percent of Russian and "Russian-speaking" population in the republic has sharply decreased, even in those districts where they made up a majority. With the beginning of "perestroika" ethnic tensions grew, people began to divide themselves based on their ethnic background and the further this process continued, the more complicated things became. Under these conditions the migration of Russians out of Dagestan increased significantly.

When the war began in Chechnya and especially after the tragic events in Kizlyar, fear of these events spilling over the border into Dagestan spread among the "Russian-speaking" population, especially in the areas near the Chechen border.

During the last few years, the reasons for migration are related to the war in Chechnya, to some statements of various Chechen leaders about the need to unite the Hasavyurt and Novolak (Auhovski) district with Chechnya, to tensions along the border, constant provocations, stealing cattle, taking hostages etc.

It is possible to designate the following reasons for the migration of the Russian and "Russian-speaking" population from Dagestan:
1. Poor economic conditions.[39]
2. Social vulnerability of the "Russian-speaking" population, especially in the cities and districts, where it is a small minority.
3. Fear related to the Chechen war and problems on the Dagestan-Chechen border.

Migration of Ethnic "Dagestanis" from NIS Countries and Russia back to Dagestan

At the time of the Soviet Union people left for the regions of Russia and the Union Republics to work, to receive and continue their education, make a career and so on. As a result of the collapse of the USSR, political and economic hardships in the NIS, growth of interethnic tension and sometimes even open persecution, the migration flow of ethnic "Dagestanis" has reversed and people have begun to return to Dagestan.

The return of "Dagestanis" from Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia takes place for the following main reasons:

- a very low living standard in Central Asia;
- a very low living standard and ethnic tension in Azerbaijan and Georgia; and
- pressure and abuse of power on behalf of local authorities against all native peoples of the North Caucasus and the Trans-Caucasus including the ethnic "Dagestanis."

As it is nearly impossible to live in the mountains, all returning people try to settle in the plains. People from the mountains also try to move to the plains which creates internal migration (people depart from their homes because there is no work).

There are almost only old people left in the mountains today who live on their pensions and large families that receive child support. As it was mentioned above there is a very complicated economic situation in Dagestan. People returning to the Republic and those who have migrated from the mountains try to find jobs, but everything is occupied as there is a huge deficit of jobs. That's why many people are forced to earn a living by criminal or semi-criminal acts. Tension and ethnic contradictions are rising in the Republic.

One of the most difficult situations in the context of the return of ethnic "Dagestanis" is the immigration to Dagestan of the Kvarely Avars from the Kvarelski district in Georgia. "Kvarely"

Avars have lived in the Kvarelski district of the Georgian Republic for over a century. They were located in three villages—Tivi, Sarusu and Chindijskuri. When Zviad Gamsahurdia came to power in Georgia they found themselves under pressure.

The roads to their villages were blocked, people stopped receiving pensions and benefits, the vineyards were confiscated, and there were threats of physical massacre. The "Kvarely" Avars have requested the leadership of Dagestan to help them move back to their historic motherland.

"Kvarely" Avars were offered to migrate from Georgia to the city of Yuzhno-Suhokumsk in the Nogai district of Dagestan. The steppe covers most of this district, there is a shortage of water, that's why most of the migrants do not want to move there.

Nevertheless seven buildings have been constructed in this city for the migrants to live in, but most of the migrants moved to Mahachkala, to the Stalskoe village of the Kizilyurt district and to the Kizlyar district, which are all in the plains.

Two-hundred-thirty-five families moved to Dagestan and 705 families stayed in Georgia. All migrants, both those who already moved and those who were in Georgia received pensions, benefits and medical assistance in Dagestan as they could receive it in Georgia.

This process has already lasted over five years. The time frame, which had been set by Federal institutions and the government of Dagestan came to an end, but the plans were not realized. The government of the Russian Federation does not provide sources of financing to fulfil the program of migration (except for the Federal Migration Service of Russia, which provided financing for buying and assembling buildings for the migrants from Georgia). The leadership of Georgia declares that it cannot pay compensation for the property left behind by the migrants (houses, gardens etc.) because it does not have the money. As a result, people are in a complicated situation, neither in Georgia nor in their

historical homeland are they needed and they do not trust any governments.

Nongovernmental Organizations and Activists of Dagestan

In the process of their work in the territory of Dagestan, the members of "Nonviolence International" Society have contacted a few NGOs and an expert of the Network for Ethnological Monitoring.

Charitable Fund "Medik" (Kizlyar branch)

Registered in May of 1993. Operates in Kizlyar.
Headed by Andrey Tretyakov.
Address: Dagestan Republic, Kizlyar, Pobedy street 1, apt. 2., tel. in Kizlyar: 2–30–98.[40]

Information

The main activity of the Fund is to render medical and social help to children, disabled, elderly, war veterans. Initially the Fund rendered assistance to people at their homes—people with low incomes, with health problems when they could not come themselves to the medical facilities.

The Fund rendered social help. It took patronage over children's institutions in town and over a special school in Mahachkala. This activity was supported by the students of Dagestan Medical Institute and did not last long because its financing was terminated.

After the tragic events in Kizlyar, the Fund assisted medical and children's institutions of the city in receiving medical supplies, children's toys and distributed warm clothes in the village of Pervomaiskoe.

Perspectives

At the present time the Fund, in cooperation with Nonviolence International–NIS is developing a project aimed to organize psychological assistance for the children, doctors, teachers who suffered from psychological stress during the tragic events of January 1996. This is planned as a fairly inexpensive project (around $7,000–8,000) and could serve as a pilot project for similar programs in

other areas that suffered from the war, including Chechnya itself.

Hasavyurt Regional Charity Fund "Spasenie" ("Salvation")

Contacts: The Chairman of the Fund Umar Djavtaev, Chairman assistant Vahmurad Ashabov and Irainat Karimova.
Address: Dagestan Republic, 368005 Hasavyurt, Zarechnaja Street 63, tel.: (8722310) 36–64.

Information

The main direction of activities of the Fund is creation of an assistance centre for refugees from the Chechen war. This centre renders the following assistance:
- legal aid to the refugees;
- finding buildings for housing refugees;
- promoting the media to highlight the problems that concern the refugees;
- help in the search for Russian servicemen who were captured as prisoners of war; and
- searching for "missing" people.

Perspectives

As the war has been declared over and the majority of refugees have already returned to Chechnya, this organization can readjust to the new challenges it is facing and play an important role in easing tensions on the Chechen-Dagestan border. Nonviolence International–NIS hopes to assist this NGO as well as the one in Kizlyar in getting an email address.

Kisriev Enver (an expert of the Network of Ethnological Monitoring and Early Warning of conflicts)

Address: Dagestan Republic, 367012 Mahachkala, Marksa Street 11 G, apt. 21, tel.: (22) 67–3974, (22) 67–2795, email: enver@eawarn.dagestan.su

Information

Enver Kisriev is a highly qualified specialist, an expert in the fields of ethnology, anthropology and interethnic relationships in Dagestan. He is a consultant at the People's Council—the highest governmental body in Dagestan. Though he is not really an NGO activist, we believe it is right to include him in this publication because his expertise might be of great value to any organizations or agencies that decide to work in this troubled region.

Gulnara Ahmedova

Address: Dagestan Republic, Mahachkala, Marksa Streer 11 G, apt. 21, tel.: (22) 67–2795.

Information

Gulnara is a young woman from Dagestan living in Mahachkala. She has attended some youth conferences with representatives of various NGOs from the Caucasus. At present she is not a member of any specific NGO, but is very interested in the possibility of getting involved in some organization where she could contribute to peace and interethnic cooperation in her Republic. She could be a useful person to contact in Mahachkala if her help is needed. ∎

Notes

1. This doesn't mean, however, that bloodshed has ceased completely.

2. It is natural that such divisions are rather conditional, especially between the second and third category. Some organizations, such as ICRC, IOM occupy a kind of intermediate position.

3. For example: IOM operations in Chechnya began, basically, through cooperation with a small Moscow-based NGO and some local Chechen activists, who on their own had already begun to evacuate civilians from Grozny in January 1995 at a time when the fighting in the city reached its peak and no official or international agency was able to operate in that area.

4. For example, during the work in Chechnya, the International Organization for Migration was often confused with the Russian Federal Migration Service what caused sometimes negative attitudes toward it.

5. Abstractly speaking, each era brings forward certain people. But when times begin to change at a kaleidoscopic pace many people appear who were pulled out of their everyday lives and become leaders in different spheres but after a short time the need for them in their new capacity vanishes.
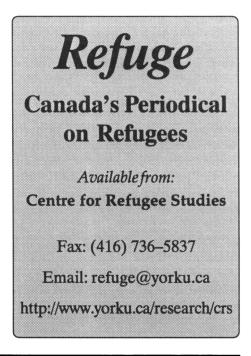
   This is seen best when you look at politics and note an unreasonably high number of various parties and movements built around different figures who claim to be serious leaders. However, a similar situation may be seen in the field of NGOs and among people who worked for a long time in different international organizations.

6. The given list by no means can be considered complete. We know that there are many more people and organizations who worked no less than the ones we mentioned and therefore we apologise for not including them in the list. However, it is nearly impossible to know and mention everybody.

7. Recently this organization published a small brochure with advice for NGO representatives who are planning to work in conflict zones. We highly recommend to look at it as well.

8. The Chechens often use the nickname "Indians" for such groups—nothing against native Americans, however.

9. Helping those in need is generally an important aspect of Muslim culture. We have observed in different conflict zones of the former USSR that countries and territories which are predominantly Muslim are more successful in dealing with such human consequences of crises and wars as huge refugee flows often with less available resources to begin with.

10. The local NGO responsible for this project is the Society for Peace and Human Rights. It is headed by Shaman Adaev, a young Chechen who became well-known for his work with journalists, human rights activists and with international organization throughout the entire war.

11. In fact, the word Sernovodsk comes from the Russian "Sernye vody," which means sulphur waters. Before The war there was a large sanatorium located in the village Unfortunately, it suffered the heaviest damage during the events of March 1996.

12. That does not mean that it is theoretically impossible to have a return on your investments, but that completely depends on the ability of your partner to make a profit in an extremely difficult environment and secondly—on his willingness to share the profits with you. No legal instruments are available today to guarantee any agreements and it is doubtful that they will appear in the foreseeable future.

13. For example, one of the large round central squares was given (unofficially) the name "Minutka" because once upon a time there was a cafe by that name next to the square. I remember how after a month in Grozny, I still had difficulties figuring out what people meant when they described their addresses in a manner like "the third house on the left when you turn right of the Minutka square."

14. One of the peculiarities of the situation with Sernovodsk and therefore with the society "For Peace and Human Rights" is that administratively Sernovodsk is in some cases still considered part of the Ingush Republic within the Russian Federation. The reason for that is that when the former Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic split in 1992, there was a decision between the Chechen and the Ingush leadership not to draw a border line in order to avoid conflict. Sernovodsk used to be part of the Sunjenski district of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic, a district that was considered to become part of the new Ingush Republic. However, the majority of the population of the village are ethnic Chechens and de facto Sernovodsk became part of Chechnya. As it was mentioned, in March of 1996 the Russian military surrounded, bombarded and "cleansed" the village, thus recognizing it as Chechen territory. At present the village has a Chechen leadership and there is no serious debate over its belonging to Chechnya. Yet in papers it is still often considered part of Ingushetia, so Shaman's society is registered as a public organization according to Russian law.

15. Articles about these visits and other activities in which the group participated have been published in the "Joint Nonviolent Action" newsletter, contact Nonviolence International-NIS.

16. For example, you may hear such remarks as "There's no God, there is Allah."

17. Today the number may have changed.

18. Right now, for example, just in order to hire a truck load from Grozny to Shali (about 30 miles) it is necessary to pay 350,000 rubles—that's enough for the survival of a family of 3–4 people for a month.

19. Members of Nonviolence International-NIS did not have an opportunity, so far, to meet Vaha themselves. The information published came from other Chechen NGOs that are known to be reliable.

20. However the small size and population of the Republic leads to the fact, that there are proportionately many more "government" jobs "per capita" then in other places. This creates opportunities for some potential activists to find themselves a role in government structures.

21. For a republic like Ingushetia the operations of the Red Crescent Society may be compared with the work of some government ministries and agencies.

22. Nonviolence International-NIS plans to help in this.

23. Districts and cities are considered separate administrative entities. The large number of fairly small districts in the republic is also related to the diverse and complicated ethnic composition of Dagestan.

24. The Chechens that live (or lived) in Dagestan are known as the akkin-Chechens.

25. The Cossacks demand the return to the Stavropol region lands along the north bank of the Terek river, that were attached to Chechnya in 1956.

26. This is an interesting fact. Recently there was a lot of information about the deported peoples and the terrible losses they suffered during the deportation. But the people that were relocated to the areas left by the deported peoples also suffered greatly. In some ways this "relocation" was similar to the deportations. The Stalinist totalitarian system was ruthless in everything it did.

27. Administrative districts of the Dagestan Republic that border on Chechnya are the Tsumandinski, Botlihski, Gumbetovski, Kazbekovski, Novolak, Hasavyurt, Babayurt, Kizlyar, Tarumovski and Nogai districts.

28. A recent survey showed that this was the opinion of more than 35 percent of the population of Dagestan.

29. Obviously, the most active antiwar movement developed in the areas bordering Chechnya where there is a large population of akkin-Chechens. In the first days of the war a number of federal armed personal carriers ("APC") with their crews were captured with the support of the local population in the territory of Dagestan and then transferred to Chechnya.

30. The Chechen fighters claimed that initially there was no plan to attack the city and the objective of the operation was to destroy a helicopter airfield located next to the city, that was used as a base for federal army helicopters that bombed Chechnya and a military garrison. However on the airfield there were only two helicopters and the garrison organized a fierce resistance, after which the fighters entered the city in order to take hostages and that way to secure a safe passage to Chechnya.

31. Like the statement made by Aslan Mashadov (the Chief of staff of the Chechen military formations during the war and presently a likely candidate for presidency in the upcoming elections) when he referred to the Dagestan city of Hasavyurt as "the ancient Vainakh land."

32. In the city of Hasavyurt the Chechens make up 32 percent of the population and in the Hasavyurt district—25 percent.

33. The members of Nonviolence International-NIS society repeatedly observed, that akkin-Chechens say "we" regarding the people of Dagestan and "they" about Chechens living in Chechnya. We believe this is a very interesting and indicative fact.

34. If the person lives in the southern part of Dagestan, it is enough to present his passport with the residence permit to cross the border.

35. Besides that, in the middle of 1995 the city authorities in Hasavyurt, where the largest number of refugees came from, demanded that all men aged 16 and over must register at the city militia. Later this decision was reversed, but it also deterred people from getting registered.

36. 2,465 rubles is the equivalent of U.S. $0.40–0.50. This is just enough to buy one loaf of bread.

37. Ethnic "Dagestanis" have very strong family ties, what is known as "tuhumstvo." When a family is large, when some relatives hold important positions in power structures, these people try to find a good job for other relatives, they protect them, help them, etc. Russians, living in Dagestan usually have small families, weak relationships among relatives, they don't support each other the way Dagestanis do, that is why they became the most vulnerable ethnic group in time of economic and political crisis.

38. We mean the Kizlyar and Tarumovski districts of Dagestan.

39. Dagestan stands second to the last among the Russian regions by its living standard.

40. Unfortunately there is no direct-dial phone service to Kizlyar, you have to call through an operator. Nonviolence International-NIS is also planning to organize an email address in Kizlyar, that will help in communications with the "Medik" Fund. ◻

Nazi Collaborators in the Soviet Union during and after World War II

Boris Kovalev

Abstract

Based on documents from the Russian archives, which in the early 1990s became open to the researchers, the author gives an account of the problem of collaboration with Nazi Germany in the USSR during World War II. He discusses the role of special punitive detachments, formed from the local populations in the occupied territories, in assisting Nazis in their policy of terror and genocide. A brief history of the infamous 667th punitive battalion, "Shelon," and some of its members serves as an illustrative example. The author also explains why so many Nazi collaborators from the former Soviet Union managed to escape punishment and settle in the Western countries, Canada and the United States in particular, and also traces the history of some of them.

Précis

En se basant sur des documents des archives russes devenus accessibles aux chercheurs au début des années 1990, l'auteur rend compte du problème de la collaboration avec l'Allemagne nazie en URSS pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Il analyse le rôle de détachements punitifs spéciaux, qui étaient mis en place à partir d'éléments issus des populations locales des territoires occupés, et qui avaient pour rôle d'assister l'occupant nazi dans sa politique de terreur et de génocide. Un bref historique du sinistre 667ième Bataillon Punitif "Shelon" et une description signalétique de certains de ses membres fournit ici un exemple

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The full names of the alleged Nazi criminals mentioned in the article are in the Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation.

This article was translated from the Russian by Roza Kovalev.

illustratif. L'auteur explique aussi comment un si grand nombre d'anciens collaborateurs nazis de l'ex-Union Soviétique ont pu échapper à leur peine et s'installer sans être inquiétés dans plusieurs pays occidentaux, notamment le Canada et les États-Unis, et retrace l'historique de la trajectoire de certains d'entre eux.

Introduction

The problem of Nazi collaborators during and after World War II has been the subject of my research since my student days. But it was only in early 1991 that I could approach it professionally for the first time. Once many positive political changes took place in Russia, I received access to the Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service in Russia. This paper is based on the documents, which were obtained from these archives.

The nature of this work there was quite challenging. In some archives the documents from the World War II period are not indexed and those who work in the archives do not know their volume numbers and the information these documents contain. It is no exaggeration to say that after many years of silent storage in the archives of Russia, many of these documents were first touched by me.

After World War II, millions of people found themselves far from their original places of residence. The reasons for this situation were both attempts to save themselves from the atrocities of the military actions and to escape the punishment for crimes they had committed. Dozens of names of those who had been involved in the Nazi crimes during World War II are known to me from the materials stored in the civil, military, and KGB (Committee for State Security) archives. Many of those guilty of crimes managed to emigrate and settle in Canada and the United States under a false identity or by concealing their past. Thus, it is still too early to say with con-

viction that the problem of Nazi crimes during World War II has been solved, since not all Nazi criminals have received appropriate punishment for their atrocities. This paper also mentions a number of Nazi criminals and collaborators from Russia whose lives have been investigated in detail.

Special Detachments from the Local Population

In the occupied countries of Europe, the Nazis pressured local populations to cooperate with them. These collaborators were usually assigned to fulfil the most "dirty" jobs connected with the extermination of the population. In their attempts to subjugate the local populations, the Nazis created the so-called "bodies of new administration," that co-opted the services of those willing or coerced to collaborate with them.

The initiative for the creation of the local administration came from the military commandant's office, which badly needed the support of institutions of civil management. In the cities and towns these "bodies of new administration" were widely created. They constituted the executive and administrative units of the local self-government and incorporated the police, finances and taxes, as well as assistance to the families whose members went to work in Germany. The control of these bodies stretched beyond the interests of a given city or town and had a general regional scope.

In the rural areas, administrative functions were fulfilled by the so-called *Golovy* (Heads). In August 1941, the occupants made it clear that beside the definite administrative functions (tax collection, control and the surveillance of the local population for the anti-German spirit), the Heads were responsible for bringing all regulations of the German Administration to the attention of the local population and for the promotion of the ideas of "Great Germany and

National Socialism." To control the occupied territory, German military forces began to create "services of order." According to the regulations, such services had to keep public order and maintain security among local population, provide assistance to the occupants in the execution of the criminal police missions SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, or Security Service) aimed against any form of the anti-government activity.

Special Detachments in the Territory of the Former Soviet Union

The "services of order" were widely diffused throughout the territory of the former USSR (Soviet Union). In different occupied regions of the country, a variety of police divisions were established. The Nazis invested big hopes in the persons who had been persecuted by the Soviet administration. Apart from common criminals, there were many people who had suffered from collectivization and repressions in 1937–38. The functions of the police ranged from looking after order in the streets to fighting with subversive elements.

One of the main targets of the German administration was the complete passportization (identification) of the local population which was carried out by the Russian police. The Military commandant of the city of Staraia Russa stressed:

> By the complete identification of and registration of the local population by issuing passports to each person, they will reveal the unwanted elements, this will also make it easier for the police to work with the population in terms of search of suspicious persons—partisans and Soviet spies.[1]

The heads of the police units were ordered to create a net of trustworthy people in the shortest time possible, and to use them for the identification of persons with hostile attitudes to the German occupants. They were encouraged to hire relatives and close friends for this job.

The policemen monitored the local population and were used by the Nazis to participate in the extermination and punitive operations. Usually, the police

would prepare two different lists of population: one for the Jews and the other for politically unreliable persons. After the suspects were identified, the police would search them out and arrest them and they would be jailed after an investigation. For these purposes, a special investigation department was established. When the arrested persons were incarcerated, it was up to commandants and police to deal with them— they made decisions on the form of the punishment: whether to execute a suspect, to send him/her to the incarnation camp or to let him/her go free.

The city of Staraia Russa, for example, was at the front zone and Nazis decided "to solve the Jewish question" in the shortest time. Hence, during the autumn of 1941, the Jewish population was taken out of the city and exterminated. These actions were explained in the following way:

1. the war was unleashed at the Jewish initiative;

2. Jews were the nation of parasites living at the expense others; and

3. having seized the power in Russia, Jews created the Soviet jail system for the people.

Thus, the conclusion that followed was: "The end to Jews means the end to the war."

The persons who were collaborating with the occupants and working with the police were punished accordingly after the war, but many of them managed to escape punishment by hiding or concealing their identity.

One of the armed detachments which was active in the territory of the northwestern part of Russia was the 667th punitive battalion "Shelon," belonging to the 16th army of *Wehrmacht* under the management of the military intelligence service. The battalion was set up in February 1942, and it was formed from prisoners of war and the local population of the occupied districts of the Leningrad region. It consisted of six divisions and had 700 persons in service.

In 1942–43, this battalion destroyed more than forty residential areas and carried out multiple group and single executions. The main task for this force was "the final solution of the Jewish

question." It was assumed that the justification for the extermination of the Jewish population would be explained by the following statement, "Stalin, communists and Jews are guilty of this war from which the Russian population is suffering so much."

Those Jewish people who remained alive by 1942, had to wear identification signs, in some places these were yellow and white stars, in other places bands on the sleeves. The military authorities decided to issue a daily ration of 100 grams of bread a day per person in Jewish ghettos, and the most insignificant offence resulted in the denial of this bread ratio. In such places as Pskov, Dno, and Ostrov, all Jewish men, male teenagers and boys were exterminated. The battalion played a direct and key role in the annihilation of the Jewish population.

The military anti-Semitism was a part of the state policy of fascist Germany. In these conditions, the participation of the Jewish people in military actions on Hitler's side was thought to be impossible, but history proved otherwise. A resident of the city of Krasnograd of the Charkov region, Grigori Moiseevich Gurevich, a sergeant of the Red Army, was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1941 in the vicinity of Leningrad. As a Jew, he could be shot on the spot, but he managed to conceal his background. He said that he was Ukrainian—Grigori Mikhailovich Gurvich and was, therefore, sent to a military prison. Gurevich tried to flee twice and twice he was caught. After the last attempt, the head of the prison gave him two options—to be executed or to become an executioner. Gurevich chose the second option, and the first task he was given by the Nazis was to execute his comrades in flight. When the Germans began to form punitive battalions, Gurevich became a soldier in one of them. He was a machine-gunner and he participated in punitive actions more than once, dealing with the local population allegedly in contact with the guerrillas. In 1943, he was wounded. The Red Army was advancing and soon Gurevich was taken prisoner by the Soviets, but during the interrogation, he

managed to hide his membership in the punitive battalion. He was conscripted to the acting Red Army with which he reached Berlin. He also received military rewards for his service.

After the war, he resided in Leningrad without attracting the attention of the KGB. It was the KGB, which searched for military criminals in the USSR. This continued smoothly up to 1973, when Gurevich applied to emigrate to Israel. During a very painstaking verification of his documents the inconsistencies were revealed. This led to suspicions, and after a number of inquiries and cross examinations, it became clear that Gurevich, a person applying to move to Israel, and, Gurvich, a soldier of the Nazi punitive battalion, were one and the same person. The court sentenced him to the severest possible punishment, the death penalty.

Former Nazi Criminals in North America

In the autumn of 1943, the "Shelon" battalion was transferred to Denmark to defend the shore from the possible landing of the Allies there. Many former soldiers from the "Shelon" battalion were able to move to the United States and Canada and settle there. Information from the criminal investigation department of Russia made it possible to follow their route—from active Nazi collaborators, who were performing the dirtiest jobs, to the decent citizens who established themselves in the Western countries.

At the time when the Nazi troops were victorious, it was not difficult to pick up people from the occupied population who would co-operate with them for certain benefits, but at the end of 1943 the situation changed drastically. The so-called "additional allied detachments" started to lose their ability to fight. Many collaborators who did taint themselves with blood started to flee and join the resistance forces. This tendency was apparent not only in Russia but in other countries as well, and in these situations, the Nazis undertook the policy of relocating the collabora-

tors from the east to the west and the other way round.

Thus, many Nazi collaborators from Russia found themselves in France, Denmark, and Norway as the result of the relocations. They had to fight the local population there and guard the shoreline from the landing of English-American forces. The luckiest ones were those who had been sent to Scandinavia, since they did not participate in military actions up to the spring of 1945. They did not resist the approaching allied forces and were taken prisoners without a fight. After the war, the Soviet government requested the immediate release and forced return of all former soldiers of the punitive detachments to the USSR, so they could face punishment there, but the Allies, mainly British took their time. They knew that Stalin had ordered public hangings of anyone alleged to have collaborated with the Nazis. If they were not hanged they would be destined to serve long prison terms. Stalin's justice was not interested in the genuine facts. Very often, crimes of different weight were punished equally. In these conditions, the British officers had to choose between the immediate fulfilment of the requests of the Soviet side (according to the Yalta Agreement, all citizens of the USSR had to be returned to their "motherland") or to investigate each case separately.

All persons involved in military crimes did their best to escape deportation to the USSR. They tried to convince the Allied officers that they had been forced to put a German military uniform on and the reasons to do so were the following:
1. They wanted to save themselves from the inevitable death from starvation in the German concentration camps.
2. They intended to help the local population in some way.
3. They hated the Soviet regime which exterminated the best representatives of the Russian nation.

Some of them maintained that their participation in the war on the German side was a form of resistance to the totalitarian communist regime. And all of them without exception denied their

participation in punitive actions against the civil population. It was impossible to verify their words. They were granted the opportunity to stay in the Western Europe.

After World War II, Europe lay in ruins. Its eastern part was under USSR control; in its western part, particularly in France and Italy, the communist parties were consolidating their positions. That was the main reason why former collaborators felt like moving as far as possible from places of the recent military actions. In such circumstances, Canada and the United States became the preferred countries for emigration and settlement.

According to the available information, all collaborators who managed to emigrate to Canada and the United States became law-abiding citizens. They were not known to create problems for the authorities of their new countries of residence. Thus, the Commander of the SS battalion, A. R. and major of the *Wehrmacht* who was awarded two "Iron Crosses" was residing in the city of Cleveland (USA) until the end of 1970s. His deputy, P. R. found home in the same place. According to the documents, A. R. was an "accomplished" sadist. He enjoyed the most cruel tortures of prisoners. He entertained himself by hanging prisoners by their genitals. His deputy was nicknamed "Sanitar" because he used to shoot prisoners on the ice of frozen lakes and rivers. He shot his victims and then dumped them under the ice. In this manner, he murdered all of the residents of the village of Borki. These former members of the punitive battalion were working on the railway road in the United States up to the 1970s.[2]

Some members of the same battalion such as F. P., and V. V., who also participated in the bloody murders, came to Canada and became residents there. According to the testimony of witnesses, in December of 1942, they supervised the shooting of the peaceful population at the river Polist, which is in the northwest of Russia. One of the witnesses testified, "Among the bodies there was a wounded boy of 9–10 years, he was crying and sobbing from pain,

two killers, [F. P. and V. V.], who were nicknamed Vasia and Skobar, approached the boy and gunned the boy."[3] From the 1950s, both F. P. and V. V. were residing in Toronto. F. P. resided in Mississauga and later he moved to Toronto. He became a neighbour of V. V., his companion in the punitive actions.

Apart from these two, other alleged killers from the same battalion moved to the country of the Maple Leaf. These included S. K., V. S., and V. L. The first one showed the most horrible cruelty towards the Jewish population. V. S. and V. L. eagerly followed orders and solved the "Jewish problem" in the city of Porchov completely. They were appointed to work at the Commandant's office. First of all, they started with cutting the bread ratio in the ghetto by half, that is to 50 grams of bread per person. This is how they explained their actions, "Russian people are starving and in this situation, Zydy [a diminutive Russian term for Jews] do not need food." The Jewish population of the ghetto faced starvation, and people were getting weaker and weaker, and many became too exhausted to go to work. V. S. and V. L. daily inspected the houses where the Jewish people lived and beat to death those who were still alive but too weak to move. According to the reports, which were found in the archives, those two murdered more than 20 Jewish persons. V. L. settled in Toronto.[4]

During the first months after the war, the government of the USSR created special bodies that were in charge of returning objects of art from the territory of Germany and its allies, that had been seized by Germany in Russia between 1941 and 1944. The relocation of the art objects to the Third Reich was monitored not only by Nazi Germany government authorities, but also by individual officers and soldiers who were often assisted by local persons.

In recent years, the interest of the public in the problems of recovery of the lost property, i.e. the recovery of the assets which were relocated in the years of World War II, has increased.

The story of V. P. reflects this issue and is worth discussing. He was the first city head of the ancient Russian city of Novgorod during the German occupation. He was a professional historian and before the war he worked in the Historical Museum of Novgorod. There was no time to evacuate all the exhibits from the museum; many were left in Novgorod which was occupied by the Nazis in August of 1941. V. P. participated directly in the transfer abroad of the most valuable objects of art.[5] Lost forever were the collections of ancient Russian Icons and French paintings of the 18th century. Among other lost paintings, we can mention the canvas of Peter Paul Rubens, "The Portrait of Vespasian." These paintings belonged to the private collections of Russian noblemen who resided in this area before the October Revolution of 1917. They were seized during the Revolution and distributed among the museums. The museum of Novgorod ranked high in the collections of art before World War II.

V. P. left Russia for Germany in 1943 and for some time any trace of him was lost. At the end of 1950s, he was seen in Italy and in the United States, and at the same time the paintings from the Novgorod museum appeared in the art market. In 1988, when Novgorod celebrated the millennium of the adoption of Christianity, St. Sophia Cathedral of Novgorod received a gift from an American collector, the icons that had been lost during the war. Art critics and historians assumed that these icons had been seized by V. P. whose responsibility was to look after the storage of icons in Novgorod.

The cold war and the situation of mistrust between the East and the West helped many Nazi criminals to escape the punishment they deserved. After the death of Stalin, the international situation became more flexible. The new policies of Nikita Khrustchev allowed masses of the imprisoned to be set free and in this new situation the Soviet secret services abandoned the search for false criminals. The KGB created new structures, which enforced the search for Nazi war criminals, but it would be unjust and wrong to say that no work had been done before. The KGB had the files of all persons who were under suspicion. Their friends, relatives and colleagues were questioned; their correspondence was constantly checked and attempts were made to locate them.

At the end of the 1950s, mail from abroad began to come to the USSR. The authors were people who had been forcefully moved to work in Germany during World War II and who decided after the war not to return to the USSR. Officers of the KGB were looking for any piece of information that could shed some light on the war criminals. We can assume that Soviet diplomats and other representatives of the USSR abroad were involved in the same work, i.e. to collect all possible information about the war criminals. The majority of the criminals had been located and at this point the work was stopped except in one instance. In the middle of the 1960s, a scandal was sparked in Germany because one of the former Nazi criminals had a high position in the Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany. As a result the former SS officer lost a prestigious position.

The materials on former Nazi collaborators who resided in Canada and the United States were prepared for a meeting between Leonid Brezhnev and Gerald Ford in the City of Vladivostok in 1974. The Soviet periodicals appeared to have numerous materials about the Nazi punitive actions, its victims and the perpetrators of these crimes. The number of witnesses was very large and U.S. authorities suggested that the witnesses should be allowed to travel to the United States to help in the investigation; but the Soviet authorities refused to cooperate. Many witnesses have now passed away.

Conclusion

Nazi crimes were committed more than 50 years ago but we have to remember that the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal have not been annulled, and that crimes against humanity do not have time limits. More than fifty years have passed since the day when World War II, the bloodiest war in the history of mankind, ended. The main culprits of the war, the German fascists were pun-

ished. The leaders of the Third Reich were charged with crimes against humanity and received severe sentences, usually the death penalty. Also many of those who collaborated with the Nazis and executed the orders to exterminate both Germans and the representatives of other nations were also punished, but there were many who managed to escape justice and hide in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. ∎

Notes

1. The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Novgorod Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. 1/6995, Vol. 1, 164–65.

2. The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Leningrad Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. 19344-A19143, Vol. 2.

   The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Novgorod Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. 1/6995, Vol. 4.

3. The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Novgorod Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. 43689, 34–35.

4. The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Pskov Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. C 14643, Vol. 3.

5. The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Novgorod Region. Archives Criminal Record: No. 2/4995, Vol. 1.

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The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Leningrad Region and the City of St. Petersburg. Archives Criminal Record: No. 19344.

The Archives of the Administration of the National Security Service of the Russian Federation of the Pskov Region. Archives Criminal Records: No. C 16229, No. C 7014, No. C 14643, No. 2467. ◻

CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES

REFUGE

CALL FOR PAPERS

Not Just Numbers; Legislative Review: Implications for Refugee Policy

Guest Editor Prof. Michael Lanphier

The issue presents an account of the Legislative Review *Not Just Numbers*. As the first systematic externally commissioned review of refugee and immigration policy in more than two decades, the issue examines background to the review process, the report, with emphasis on refugee policy and types of response from the actively interested segments of the Canadian public. An important feature is the role and effectiveness of public inquiry in the form of a Legislative Review in the revision of refugee policy from the standpoint of those who consider themselves stakeholders.

Possible articles:

- Refugee policy implementation in the 1990s: major gaps and problems.
- Refugee policy and immigration policy: two aspects of the same thing?
- Legislative Review: steps to preparing a public report.
- NGOs view the report: responses and problems identified (3–4 brief accounts).
- Voices of former refugees (brief accounts).
- Views from abroad (reactions from other countries)
- Prospects of reform: government and Canadian society.

Contributions with abstracts are invited. They must be received not later than October 15, 1998. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and referenced in proper academic form. They should not exceed 16 pages or about 4000 words. Short papers of about 900 words are also welcome. Word-processed submissions may be sent on disc or by e-mail.

On accepte aussi des articles en français. Le style doit conformer aux normes exigés pour les articles rédigés en anglais.

Deadline: October 15, 1998.

For further details, please contact:

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