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The publication of this Digest was made possible through the assistance from Pax Christi Vlaanderen and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium.

DOSH Magazine editorial board recognizes the importance of publishing the English digest. We do not have an opportunity to publish an English version of each issue of the magazine and we try to include in the semi-annual digest the articles from previous issues that, in our opinion, reflect the burning issues of human rights violations of the Chechens and other residents of the Caucasus and in Russia.

The materials presented in this issue illustrate the selective approach of Russian justice to its citizens on the basis of their ethnicity. If the murderers of peaceful Chechens (Budanov, Ulman and similar) are treated by the state in a more delicate way than it treats ordinary criminals, the Chechens against whom the Russian law enforcement bodies openly fabricate criminal cases and the courts obediently pronounce a guilty verdict, are deprived of an elementary opportunity to protect themselves. Moreover, when staying in Russian prisons and colonies, they suffer from humiliation, violation of their human and civil rights, and sometimes from medieval tortures.

Blatant injustice that the authorities express towards the Russian citizens from the Caucasus region in the past years has become almost a norm. In this issue of DOSH digest you can read about the most vivid examples of judicial reprisals against innocent people Zara Murtazaliev and Zaurbek Talkhigov. You can also read about situations when the Chechens are forced to live in the streets named in honor of the murderers of their relatives and friends, how Kazakhstan authorities "have borrowed" from their Russian colleagues the methods of militant xenophobia, about the menacing scale of oncologic diseases as one of the consequences of the past wars, about the problems of demography and unemployment in the Chechen Republic, and about many other issues.

We express our deep gratitude to our partner organization Pax Christi Vlaanderen and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium through whose assistance we could publish this third issue of DOSH Magazine digest in English.

Israpil SHOVKHALOV
Editor-in-Chief



Dosh #3(17)2007
Svetlana GANNUSHKINA

THE ULMAN CASE

The Office of Public Prosecutor and the Administration of the President have often been claiming that hundreds of criminal cases had been opened regarding crimes committed against Chechen civilians. However, the number of investigations resulting in punishment of the defendants is insignificant. The Edward Ulman case is one of a few cases of murder of Chechen civilians by the military to have reached court hearing. Also, it is the second case when officers of the Russian army faced trial.

Over the entire period of the so-called Second Chechen war, that is the large scale military actions accompanied by mass murder of civilian population, precisely, for the period from December 1999 through April 2003, the court pronounced guilty of crimes against civilians 7 officers, 3 warrant officers, 22 contract soldiers and sergeants, and 19 conscript personnel. However, only 19 military men, no officers among them, were sentenced and serve their time. According to Memorial Civil Rights Center, the number of victims over this period is not less than 20 thousand civilians.

Only two episodes of this terrible massacre have surfaced: the case of Colonel Budanov who after a long litigation was sentenced to 10 years and the case of Captain Ulman and others that is not closed yet.

On January 11th, 2002, near the village of Dai, Shatoy district of the Chechen Republic, Captain Eduard Ulman of GRU special troops, Lieutenant Kalaganskiy and warrant officer Voevodin opened fire at the car whose driver, according to them, did not obey the order to stop. One of the passengers, a 68 years old director of a rural school Said-Magomed Alaskhanov of Nokhchi-Keloy village, was killed at the spot and two other passengers were wounded.

Having realized that these were civilians and they could be punished, the three officers started consultations with their superiors whether they should destroy the witnesses of their crime. These consultations lasted for several hours.

Beyond human imagination are the feelings experienced by the people awaiting their destiny during these terrible hours: the mother of seven children and pregnant with her eighth child Zaitkhan Dzhavatkhanova, her nephew Dzhamlail Musaev, school teacher Abdul-Vakhab Satabaev, forester Shakhban Bakhaev, and the driver from the village of Dai Khamzat Taburov.

Eduard Ulman reported the event to communications officer Major Perelevskiy who, ostensibly having contacted the head of operation Colonel Plotnikov, passed them the order: "Do not take prisoners. You've got six 200s" (cargo-200 - dead bodies). The word "order" became the keyword in this case.



Ulman gave the execution order and Kalaganskiy and Voevodin carried it out.

Later the investigation failed to establish whether that criminal order had been given by Colonel Plotnikov. Plotnikov denies it claiming that special troops worked independently in the operation. However, it matters only for the evaluation of actions by Plotnikov but not Ulman and his company. Could they consider as "prisoners" the pregnant woman and several civilians, which was verified immediately after the first shooting and after checking their documents? Could they misunderstand that by carrying out an obviously criminal order (if there was such an order) they were committing a crime?

They understood it all. And they killed to conceal their first crime, the shooting of a peaceful car. For this reason after the execution of the witnesses the three officers made an attempt to blow up the six bodies together with the car. They did this job badly. When later after military commandant of Shatoy district Major Vitaly Nevmerzhitsky examined the place, there was no doubt that the car had exploded not because of a land mine but as a result of a brutal murder.

In November 2003, these were the charges against Ulman, Kalaganskiy and Voevodin when they were put on trial before a jury. Perelevsky was charged with instigation and complicity in committing of a crime. The case was examined by the North-Caucasian district military court in Rostov-on-Don. The hearings were accompanied by a constant support of the defendants by sympathizing citizens. The court was investigating one issue: did the officers carry out an order or did they act at their own discretion.

On April 29th, 2004, the jury pronounced Ulman and his men not guilty.

On May 11th, 2004, the verdict of not guilty was confirmed by the court.

AND THE BUDANOV CASE



Following the complaint by the victims, the Military Board of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation canceled the verdict and the case was sent back to court for examination by a different jury.

On May 19th, 2005, the jury again unanimously found the murderers not guilty.

The history repeats itself: the Military Board of the Supreme Court again canceled the verdict.

Since August 21st, 2006, the Ulman case has been in court for the third time, now without the jury but with a board of three professional judges.

On April 4th, 2007, the prosecutor demanded to sentence Ulman and Perelevskiy to 23, Voevodin to 19, and Kalaganskiy to 18 years of imprisonment.

And Ulman, Voevodin and Kalaganskiy stopped to appear at court hearings. A federal search warrant was issued for them. The court changed preventive punishment from a travel ban to confinement under guard.

Now that the guilty verdict became a reality, all the three turned out to be fugitives.

The distorted public opinion also became the reason for the three court hearings in the Ulman case. There are infinite discussions whether Plotnikov gave the order or not, and if he did, is it possible to consider Ulman and the others guilty. However, there is no legal problem here. Article 42, Part 2 of Russian Federation Criminal Code

reads: "The person, who committed an intentional crime while executing an obviously illegal order or ruling, bears criminal liability in accordance with general practice. Failure to execute an obviously illegal order or ruling excludes criminal liability."

The issue here is psychological. The jury, the judges and a greater part of the Russian society very much would not like to see these guys as criminals. They were

protecting the Native land, restoring the constitutional space, and participating in antiterrorist operations. They were blessed by the Patriarch who has never held a service for the lost civilians. People have got used to be proud of the soldiers. The shame with which they have covered themselves humiliates not only them but also the society, therefore it is so difficult for the society to reconcile with the fact that its heroes turned out to be murderers.

Now let's recollect how the Budanov case was covered in official mass media, first of all on TV. The rapist, the murderer of a young girl, the man who that very day nearly destroyed another officer was on trial, he had a strong support in the court hall led by the governor of the Ulyanovsk region General Vladimir Shamanov. Shamanov asserted that it was a trial not so much of Budanov but rather of all Russian officers who were fighting in the Chechen Republic.

In fact it was not true. In the Budanov case, there was General Gerasimov who had arrested Budanov. He said: "I am convinced that Colonel Budanov killed Elsa Kungaeva." There is also evidence provided by General Vereiskiy. General Barannikov came to the house of the killed Elsa Kungaeva and on behalf of everybody asked her parents to pardon for all.

The most important thing in the Budanov case is Lieutenant Roman Bagreev who in the morning of that

very day refused to shoot at the village of Tangi-Chu. For this refusal he was chained in handcuffs, beaten, thrown in a trench, and covered with bleaching powder.

So, why was it Shamanov and not Gerasimov or Bagreev who commented on the Budanov case in all these TV broadcasts?

But the events evolved differently. The torture of Russian officer Roman Bagreev was qualified by the court as admissible punishment of the officer who did not execute the order.

Perhaps this is the origin of the Ulman case and the jury's sympathetic attitude to him?

It is very probable that Budanov's arrest saved Roman Bagreev's life.

The most humane words of all that was said in media reports from the court hearings in the Budanov case were pronounced, strangely enough, by Budanov: "When I was sent there, nobody told me that our citizens lived there. We were told that they were enemies who should be destroyed."

Not only Budanov was told this but also those who were entrusted to report about the war in the Chechen Republic.

On June 14th, 2007, the Ulman case was closed with a guilty verdict. The three fugitives were sentenced in absentia: Captain Ulman to 14 years, his assistant Lieutenant Kalaganskiy to 11 years, and warrant officer Voevodin to 12 years of imprisonment. Major Perelevskiy who was present in court was sentenced to 9 years.

And again mass media cannot determine the essence of the Ulman case. Was it a political directive for an example punishment of the executors of the order issued by the authorities and betrayed by the authorities or was it a trial of conscious murderers of innocent victims according to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation? No, the verdict will not correct the Russian army. It will not correct the society in which the value of a human life is reduced to zero.

And nevertheless, it is a small step in the correct direction.



Dosh #3(17)2007
Zoya SVETOVA

HE WISHED TO RESCUE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The tragedy in the Theatrical center at Dubrovka took away 130 lives. The criminal investigation of the act of terrorism is suspended, so there is almost no hope left that the secret of this tragedy will ever be revealed. The terrorists who took hostages are all killed. Shamil Basayev, who is considered to be the paymaster of this crime, is killed too. It turns out that the only person convicted in the Nord-Ost case is Zaurbek Talkhigov. Not only was he convicted unfairly, but he is also continuously tortured in prison finding fault with him for any slightest infringement of the routine. It is being done in retort: Talkhigov does not wish to plead guilty. But how is it possible to admit a crime which you did not commit?

Crime

It seems to me that Zaurbek Talkhigov was appointed the accomplice of the terrorists who had seized the Theatrical center at Dubrovka, whereas he had come there with a peace-making mission. Early in the morning of October 25th, 2002, he arrived to the Theatrical center having responded to the appeal of Aslambek Aslakhanov, Adviser of the President, to the Chechens "to make a live shield and to exchange themselves for the hostages." He thought that he could persuade the terrorists to release women and children. Aslakhanov gave him a mobile phone number of Baraev. After several attempts Talkhigov managed to talk with someone of those who were holding hostages. He came to an agreement with the terrorists that they would release foreigners. Right after this he was arrested. The negotiations were broken. The hostages were not released. For his noble impulse, for the attempt to rescue people Talkhigov lost his freedom for a long time.

From the materials of the investigation it is known that Zaurbek conducted all phone negoti-

ations with FSB being present. In addition to it, after each conversation he came to the crisis center office to write down its contents at their request. Today it is known that not only Talkhigov but many other people spoke with the terrorists by phone. In particular, Anna Politkovskaya told in one of her interviews that she passed to Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, assistant to President Putin, the phone numbers of the terrorists that had been given to her, possibly, by Aslambek Aslakhanov.

Why was it only Talkhigov who was accused of being an accomplice of the terrorists? Was it because he took his mission too seriously and at a certain moment started to interfere with the plans to release the hostages by the emergency operations center?

To stop Talkhigov's mediation activities, someone mixed a sleeping pill in his juice that he drank when he came again to the crisis center office to report about the phone negotiations. Zaurbek lost consciousness and came to himself in a detention facility. He learned about the destiny of the hostages during the investigation.

Punishment

On June 20th, 2003, judge of Moscow City Court Marina Komarova (she later condemned Zara Murtazalieva) sentenced Talkhigov to 8 and a half years in prison as an accomplice of the terrorists who captured the Nord-Ost center. It was a closed and quick trial. The main proof of Zaurbek's fault was the recording of his telephone conversation, precisely,

even not the recording but rather a loose interpretation of the conversation provided by an investigator. Experts established that it was Talkhigov's voice on the tape but could not determine who he was talking with. The tapes with telephone conversations recordings were destroyed. Also, the records that Talkhigov had given FSB officers were destroyed under strange circumstances. It turns out that without having any material proof the judge believed that Zaurbek had talked with Baraev and an unknown Akhmed. What particular things did Talkhigov tell the terrorists that cost him 8.5 years of imprisonment on the charges of complicity?

Lawyer Sergey Nasonov tells: The court considered as one of the proofs of Talkhigov's fault that he had informed the terrorists about the security cordon around the building and about the snipers on the roofs. But it was com-

monly known anyhow. All this could be observed from the windows of the Theatrical center. The judge also used another proof as the basis of the verdict. In the opinion of the court, by the very fact of the conversation with the terrorists Talkhigov rendered them psychological support. His words installed confidence in the terrorists of their criminal acts. It is utter nonsense. The contents of the conversation cannot be interpreted as the proof confirming heavy charges of complicity to terrorism.

Zaurbek Talkhigov in his interview to DOSH magazine:

Why don't you put up with your present situation?

- Because a person who wanted and tried to help the hostages was suddenly made an accomplice of the terrorists.

Why did you decide to go to the Theatrical center?

- I came to the center at Dubrovka with only one purpose: through negotiations to release women and children and in this way to show to the society that not any Chechen is a terrorist.



A Missed Act of Terrorism

On the eve of Victory Day, FSB officers found a car loaded with explosives that had been parked near a building on Profsoyuznaya Street in Moscow. Four Chechens were arrested. Later two of them were released. The other two were kept in custody. They were two Moscow students of prestigious colleges: Umar Batukaev and Ruslan Musaev. FSB website soon displayed a short message saying that terrorist activity of a group of bandits was stopped as a result of active search actions. News agencies informed that the young men had an accomplice, somebody named Loris Khamiev who had been detained in Grozny a few weeks prior to the discovery of "the bad car." By the way, this car was parked near the building where he rented an apartment and lived together with his pregnant wife.

The media also informed that Umar Batukaev was trying to evade army service. According to the relatives, Umar could not be enlisted in the army in any way because he was finishing his fifth year of studies at the Academy of Economy and Law.

The Lefortovo Court of Moscow approved the arrest of these Moscow students and soon the investigation charged them with participation in an organized criminal group, preparation to an act of terrorism, and storage of weapons.

We have partially forgotten about the notorious "Chechen" trace, about disclosing of "a terrorist underground" and other operations that were so popular in 2003-2004. Arrests of the Chechens and charges against them in "preparation to an act of terrorism" occurred,

as a rule, only after the acts of terrorism were accomplished. The arrests were supposed to demonstrate that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and FSB were doing their job properly.

In July 2003, after a woman-terrorist blew herself up at the stadium in Tushino, the former Minister of Internal Affairs Boris Gryzlov declared that a terrorist network was discovered in Elektrogorsk near Moscow. Three brothers Mukhadiev were arrested on charges of storing weapons. UBOP broke into their apartment, forced everyone to lie down on the floor, and handcuffed everybody. Then they found two boxes with 8 explosive blocks and 3 detonators in the bathroom and in the room where the brothers lived. During investigation and in court the Mukhadiev brothers confirmed that they saw how the officers brought a bag into their apartment. One brother was released immediately and the other two spent 10 months under custody. Then the judge ruled that the brothers were guilty but they should be released from custody in court, having sentenced them to the term that they had already stayed in custody. Since then high state officials never recollected disclosing a terrorist underground in connection with this case.

Another even more known case is the case of Zara Murtazalieva, a 3rd year student of Pyatigorsk Linguistic University. She was detained with 196 grams of plastic explosive which, as she confirmed and as was proved in court by her lawyers, was put into her handbag at the police station when she left the room to wash her hands. The decision about

her detention stated, in particular, that she had been trained in a terrorist camp near Baku and participated in military actions during the first Chechen war in 1994-1996. After the Embassy of Azerbaijan issued a protest to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the mother of Murtazalieva provided to the investigation a certificate confirming that her daughter studied in middle school during the first Chechen war, these absurd charges against her were dropped. Nevertheless, Murtazalieva was sentenced to 8.5 years on charges of preparation for an act of terrorism and illegal purchase and storage of weapons.

It seems to me that the case of Moscow Chechen students is a hello from the recent past. Too many similarities can be seen in the handwriting of the authors of the script about disclosing a terrorist network.

There is, however, one essential difference: the detained Moscow students were the children of Chechen intellectuals who had for many years lived in Moscow, felt quite secure, and acquired numerous connections. They could hardly imagine that their children would ever have to face the Russian law-enforcement system under such terrible circumstances. The association of Chechen public and cultural societies sent an appeal to Vladimir Putin calling him to take under special control all the criminal cases connected with the Chechens and to not allow spinning off of the Anti-Chechen hysteria in the Russian society. The Batukaev family sent a similar appeal to Ramzan Kadyrov.

On July 4th, the Lefortovo court prolonged their stay in custody through



October 8th. There was another charge in their case: a rarely used Article 277 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (preparation of attempt on life of a state or public figure).

Investigators believed that Khamiev, Batukaev and Musaev had been preparing for an act of terrorism against the President of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov.

The lawyers are under a non-disclosure pledge, therefore it is still unknown with what reasons the investigation plans to substantiate this dubious charge. It is known from press that on May 9th, 2007 the President of the Chechen Republic was going to stay in Grozny, therefore it seems doubtful that the "malefactors" could plan their attempt that day.

Fatima Batukaeva in her interview to DOSH magazine:

We left Grozny in 1994. The son went to study in the third grade at a Moscow school. He finished school and became a college student. He was a 5th year student of the Department of Law at the Academy of Economy and Law. That evening the son was followed by a strange car. He stopped his car. The other car stopped too. Umar came up to the driver and asked: "Why do you follow me? Who are you?"

Then they presented him their documents. Then the militia arrived and took my son and three other guys that were together with him. We, the Chechens, know too well how people disappear. When we arrived home there were twelve policemen at the door of our apartment. They arrived to conduct a search. They claimed that all the explosives had been all this time in my apartment. The search lasted for eight hours. They found nothing. They were officers of the 3rd investigatory department of FSB. When they left they apologized.

We will learn about the proofs collected by the investigation only when the trial will start. If this trial ever takes place.

It is hard to tell now how the case will develop, especially in view of a new charge of preparation of an attempt at the statesman. Will the students be released or will they have to share the destiny of their compatriots who had to experience all the circles of investigatory and judicial hell?

One thing is obvious: the notorious Chechen question and the political tricks around it, the victims of which are usually ordinary people, has again reminded of itself. This time the victims were those who ran away from the war, tried to build a new life and to forget about the terrorists, be they real or imaginary.

P.S. The litigation is not completed to this day and the students are still in custody.



Dosh #4(18)2007
Zoya SVETOVA

ELLA KESAEVA: SOMEONE SHOULD SPEAK THE TRUTH. LET IT BE US...

I met with Ella Kesaeva at a meeting near the Theatrical center at Dubrovka. It was October 26th, 2007, five years after the tragedy of Nord-Ost. The people were standing in front of the Theatrical center looking at the photos of the lost children and adults and the burning candles. There were many flowers. Among the speakers were the survived hostages, the parents of the victims, those who suffered from acts of terrorism in Moscow, Volgodonsk, and Beslan. Then Ella Kesaeva spoke. She was asking forgiveness from the victims and their relatives because five years ago she had not apprehended their trouble as her own, because then she kept silent. And after that there was Beslan...

I soon understood: this woman was not afraid of anything. She has lost so much and has gone through so much that she does not have any more fear. Her life sharply changed having divided into the one before Beslan and the one after Beslan.

Before Beslan, Ella Kesaeva worked as a laboratory manager at the winemaking factory Istok in Beslan. She was educated as a biochemist. She liked her job very much. The entire family of her sister was lost at the school captured by the terrorists. Ella's daughter was among hostages and she was wounded. Thanks God, she survived. Now Ella is bringing up the daughter together with her sister. However, Kesaeva devotes all her time to studying laws and searching the truth. The Voice of Beslan has brought a legal case against the state for the right to know how their children were lost and who is to blame for this.

Kesaeva puts forward simple reasons for her choice: "I have cut down my expenses. I live very modestly. After such a tragedy that happened to all of us I do not deserve a wealthy life or a life in comfort. I should do everything that depends on me and only then I can take care of myself."



Why do you have two organizations in Beslan uniting the victims of that tragedy? There is no unity among you too?

- There is unity. Both of our organizations pursue one goal. However, the organization Mothers of Beslan thinks that republican officials are guilty. We, The Voice of Beslan, are assured that decisions were taken at the federal level.

Shall we ever find out the secret of Beslan?

- There is no secret. We do not know the details, whereas by and large we saw a lot with our own eyes. Personally I saw how the school building was under heavy fire continuously from the moment of explosion till four o'clock. There is no secret to us that our children were killed by federal soldiers. It were the terrorists who took over the school. But under all laws the murderer is considered the one whose bullet killed the person. Who investigated it? Nobody did. We are sure that the President of the country interferes with the investigation. If there were his will, everything would be quickly investigated. But the matter is that all strings lead to him. Who awarded the generals after Beslan? It was Putin. The judges to whom we submit our claims and complaints are laughing to our eyes. They know in advance that all our complaints will be refused.

Asking about the secret of Beslan I meant whether we shall ever find out who had organized the capture of the hostages?

- I can tell you that information is present in the materials of the case. It says that the capture of the hostages



was organized by Basaev. This was specified by Kulaev. As for Maskhadov, there is no proof of his fault in this case. We need the truth. If a person is not guilty in the Beslan tragedy and he was arbitrarily accused, then the entire version of the events is doubtful. The route of the terrorists is not yet established with proof. In the materials of the case it is based only on the evidence provided by one person: the major of militia who accompanied them. His evidence can be questioned. It turns out that the route of the terrorists is not established, their number is not established either, their specific demands are not established, who conducted negotiations, who participated in the assault - it is not established, who was the head of the crisis center - it is not established. For all of us this is a secret. Why did they use tanks and flame guns? These questions remain unanswered. It is justified by the fact that the preliminary investigation is not over yet. And it will not be over while President Putin is in power.

Who in your opinion benefited from capturing the hostages in Beslan?

- Judging by what happened afterwards, it were the authorities who benefited the most. They strengthened their authority with the blood of the children of Beslan. If we are not savages and consider ourselves civilized people, then we should take the courage and call things by their proper names. Not when they all will retire, not when everybody will spit at them, but now because I will not be alive 10 years or a year from now. With what conscience shall I pass away and join those who I loved so much? That is why I now speak what I think and what actually happened. If I speak a lie, then let them bring charges against me!

Do you admit that by capturing the hostages and through probable negotiations the terrorists wanted to stop the war in the Chechen Republic?

- The twenty six people who were released with the help of Aushev on September 2nd said that the terrorists wished to negotiate and were ready to release all the hostages.

What are the goals of your organization The Voice of Beslan?

- We seek an objective investigation and a fair punishment of all the guilty.

What did you manage to accomplish?

- Our organization has been existing since October 2005. Before the third anniversary of Beslan, it was closed by a court decision. We disagree with this decision. We made an appeal. So far our organization is not liquidated. Our appeal is still being examined. As it was explained to us, the judge of the inferior court committed many mistakes and he is given time to correct them. Isn't it absurd? Instead of cancelling the decision of the judge about liquidation of our organization, they give the judge time to garble the decision!

Who is afraid of your organization?

- I think it is federal authorities.

Do you feel afraid?

- I am not afraid of death. I saw it. My fear of it is gone. If the children had such a painful death and we stayed away for three days, what kind of right do we have to be silent now? I simply cannot be silent. For me, to speak the truth today is a sort of justification for my silence during those three days.

You have said that you feel your fault for being silent when Nord-Ost happened?

- Then I lived just like many others live now. Yes, it was painful. It was necessary to shout loud and beat in the bells. Especially, the TV was still free then. Now everything is under control of the authorities. I think that I personally suffered for my silence. And if, God forbid, such a thing occurs to you, know that you suffer because you are silent. We should not be silent: we are not cattle. We are adult people and we should bear the responsibility for our children. Someone should start to speak. Let's say, we start. Let it be so.

Sometimes one can hear that the survivors of Beslan should revenge those who had taken hostages their children. What do you think about the idea of blood feud?

- Who to revenge? Where are our enemies?

We know the names of the terrorists. Should we start searching now for their families? You should understand: blood generates blood. It is not a way out. We are Christians. The God directs us, and we are making legal steps and tell people who is guilty and what actually happened. Should we start killing the Ingushs? In fact, they were simply manipulated. We know that at the moment the assault started no child was killed. Blood feud is not right. If we start speaking stupidly that the Ingushs are guilty or the Chechens are guilty, it will only be to the benefit of the authorities. They just want it. But it will not happen. We have understood what had happened and we have understood who is guilty. And we shall demand punishment of those who are guilty.

Why mostly women are engaged in searches of the truth?

- The pressure that we are experiencing is difficult for men to sustain. They are more vulnerable. If I had a job, I would have been fired quickly for my activities. Men should feed the family. That is why women started this struggle.

P.S.

On December 19th, 2007, the Judicial board of the Supreme Court of Northern Ossetia made a decision to close The Voice of Beslan public committee in its former structure. The members of the organization went on a hunger strike as a protest against the actions of the court.

Representatives of The Voice of Beslan committee declared that they would appeal this decision in superior courts.

According to Ella Kesaeva, during almost two years of its official existence The Voice of Beslan experienced constant pressure from special services and local authorities.

Earlier on November 22nd, 2007, an administrative charge was brought against Ella Kesaeva for installation of a sign Putin's Course with an arrow pointing in the direction of the school.



Dosh #4(18)2007
Elena SANNIKOVA

I'M FINE

Last summer Azamat Uspaev was killed at a maximum security colony in the village of Revda of Murmansk region. His relatives in Grozny did not receive a formal notice of his death. There was only an anonymous call on the mobile phone in the middle of the night. Human rights organizations of Murmansk and later the chief of the colony in a personal conversation confirmed the death of Azamat. In the morning on July 4th, Sultan Uspaev, the father of Azamat, took off from Grozny for Murmansk in hopes to bring the body of the son back home.

I learned about Azamat Uspaev four and a half years ago when I was writing a book about Madina Elmurzaeva, a courageous nurse who created a Red Cross group in Grozny during the days of a fierce fight in January 1995 and who was soon killed by a mine while she was pulling the dead out of a shell pit. Azamat, the youngest of her three children was 12 years old then.

In the summer of 2003, I was told that Azamat had been seized in the street of Grozny by armed people in masks. A year later, the court sentenced him to 17 years of prison.

What for? Having studied Azamat Uspaev's verdict in the summer of 2004, I did not find a single proof of Azamat's fault in this verdict.

"After the end of the counterterrorist operation on the territory of Grozny in 2000-2001, the participants in the illegal armed formations ... created permanent armed groups (gangs) under a common name of Jamaat..." Azamat Uspaev's verdict begins with this impressive introduction. Then it says about someone named T.A-



Kh.Sharipov (the full name is missing in the verdict) who created one of such permanent armed groups. Sharipov was convicted in April, 2002. There is evidence in his case that two political murders were accomplished together with an unspecified Azamat nicknamed Mubarik. There is neither surname of the prospective accomplice, nor age or any special signs. Nothing but the name. According to Sharipov's evidence, the last murder was accomplished together with "Azamat" and someone named T.U.Dzhamurzaev. There is also Dzhamurzaev's evidence in Sharipov's case saying that he met Sharipov and someone named Azamat (again neither surnames, nor signs).

That's all. Not a single proof! But these Sharipov and Dzhamurzaev exist and the question is: how was it possible not to ask them whether that was the same Azamat? One of them lives in Grozny, the second is in prison, that is both are quite accessible for interrogation. But there was no interrogation or face-to-face identification during the preliminary investigation and in court! All the charges are based on the evidence in Sharipov's 2002 case in which the name of Azamat Uspaev does not even appear!

And what is more... on Azamat' self-incrimination during the preliminary investigation.

"Uspaev A.S. interrogated in court session did not recognize himself guilty and stated that he was not guilty of the crimes incriminated to him and the self-incriminating evidence that he gave during preliminary investigation was given because the operative officers of RUBOP applied tortures to him, which he could not sustain."

Both the investigation and the court rejected Azamat's requests for a face-to-face identification with Sharipov or Dzhamurzaev.

The verdict mentioned the evidence provided by Bilal Uspaev who testified that his brother could not be involved in any murder in Grozny because he had been at this time together with him in Ingushetia.

Why was Azamat Uspaev accused all the same in this case?

First, because his name was Azamat. Second, he lived on the Olympic Street where these murders were committed and where that Sharipov also lived. They were even familiar because they studied at the same school.

"He is really familiar with T.A.-Kh.Sharipov with whom he studied in the same class from the fifth grade through the eighth grade at school 8. He knows that T.A.-Kh.Sharipov is convicted for certain crimes and is in prison. When the military operation started on the territory of the Chechen Republic, their family moved to Ingushetia and remained there. That is why during this period he could not commit the crime of which he is



accused. On July 1st, 2003, he was together with children in the street near the house in which he lives. Unknown people in camouflage approached to him and delivered him to RUBOP where for two days he was kept in a room chained by handcuffs to the heating radiator, and during all this time he was regularly beaten. They demanded from him to admit the crimes which he did not commit. Despite denying by the defendant of his fault, his fault ... is confirmed by the following proof..." The verdict then quotes Azamat' self-incrimination at the preliminary investigation that was signed under tortures and evidence in ... Sharipov's case of 2002.

And that was all! Justice was exercised without real proof. It was not even required to interrogate those who could tell the truth. In the meanwhile the relatives of the young man told that there lived several more young men by the name of Azamat in their neighborhood. But they had already been killed and someone was needed to be put in prison... So the twenty years old guy was sentenced to seventeen years in prison and, as a matter of fact, was doomed to destruction. This decision was pronounced by the judge of the Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic Asukhanov with the participation of state prosecutor Bataeva.

Sultan Uspaev received the body of his son in the evening of July 6th. Representatives of the Chechen diaspora of Murmansk helped the father to deliver Azamat's body to the airport.

After returning from the funeral I asked Sultan Uspaev to show me the papers that had been given to him by the administration of the colony. To my surprise, I did not find among them the document with the results of medical examination. The death certificate contained only the date of death July, 2nd. The cause of death line was empty. The paper signed by acting chief of hospital of the colony Chelobitchenko contains only two lines: "Uspaev Azamat Sultanovich, born 1982. No infectious diseases. Death occurred as a result of an accident."

I asked Sultan Uspaev about the accident and he told me the story. When he remained alone with the chief of the colony, he humanly asked him about how it all happened. The chief almost began to cry and told the story that could hardly resemble the truth: ostensibly Azamat got out onto the roof of the second floor and accidentally fell down...

Is it ever possible to die after falling from the second floor? Perhaps it is possible if a weak person hits his head against something very firm. But multiple fractures on Azamat's body, on his hands, legs and the neck, huge bruises on his face, the big rag torn off on his head up to the bone - all this does not suggest falling from the second floor. The chief of the colony assured the father that there would be an investigation. But what kind of investigation it can be, if it has already begun with a lie?

Azamat's stepmother told to me that he had called home on a mobile phone that evening. After a minute of conversation he said that he could not speak any further: it was noisy, there was a fight nearby, he could hear nothing, and he would call back. "Who is fighting, why?" - she asked. - "It is hatred ... they hate us" - Azamat could only answer.

A few days later, the prisoners who were witnesses of the drama spoke with Azamat's sister on a mobile phone and told her that her brother had rushed to rescue a Chechen named Tamerlan from the neighboring barrack. He was being beaten severely by criminals. But the number of the attackers was too big. Tamerlan managed to survive and was in a critical condition. Azamat died at night on the hands of his comrades in the barrack.

"It means that he died just like his mother when rescuing another person," - said Vaidat, the sister of Madina Elmurzaeva, Azamat's aunt.

I asked Azamat many times if he wanted me to send him anything but he always refused. He said that he did not need anything except for books.

There was something in Azamat's letters that could please and cheer up. He used to repeat: "I'm fine."

The only thing he complained about in the last conversations with me was that letters addressed to him and from him began to disappear.

Looking at Azamat's books that were given back to the young man's father, I noted his taste in the choice of Islamic periodicals and religious literature. These were the texts testifying to affinity of Islam to Christianity and excluding the feeling of arrogance and superiority.

Looking at Azamat's photos, recollecting his voice and rereading his letters, I think of a severe imagination needed to proclaim this person a murderer and a terrorist.

When the fog will dissipate,
When the doubts will dissipate,
When the hurricane that is carrying
The revelations of ideas will calm down,
There will come that last day
When we'll have to say goodbye!
But I shall not pour tears
And I shall not feel sorrow...
Spring will pass, and summer too,
Autumn and winter will come.
But the anticipation is disturbing...

I received this letter last February. With undisguised confusion Azamat confirmed that these verses were his own.

I hoped to find verses and Azamat's diaries among the things, the letters and the papers that had been given out to the father by the administration of the colony. But nothing with Azamat's personal handwriting could be found.





Dosh #4(18)2007
Malika BETIEVA
Maret ELDIEVA

When we fancied that we would be building communism, unemployment was declared a defect of capitalism. So, this regrettable phenomenon was not supposed to have anything to do with the young socialist republic. Later, during the era of developed socialism, Soviet legislation even managed to substitute the concept of unemployment for the term "parasitism", which was a criminal offense. This is difficult to imagine now, however the fact remains the fact.

Any time of the year at the intersection of Prospekt Mira and S.Lorsanov Street, one can see a crowd of people emotionally greeting the approaching cars. Here you can meet men and women of any age and professional skills who unanimously claim that they are the masters in any profession: they can professionally build, break, repair, or dig. They look with hope at everyone who approaches them! However, it is the fifth point in Grozny where the unemployed spontaneously gather into groups. There was a time when people from almost all around the republic gathered at the Central market, then at the House of Fashion, then at Dinamo stadium, and later on the street facing the stadium. And each time the police dispersed them away from a new place. It is hard to tell how much time the exchange will last at its present place.

THE UNCLAIMED

The disintegration of the USSR, the split of the authority that generated chaos and, finally, the war in the Chechen Republic brought certain corrective amendments into the way of life of Russian citizens. And Russia accepted from the West all the attributes inherent to early capitalism. Unemployment was number one on this list. However, it remains at the top of changes, despite the doubling of gross national product, strengthening of the authority of the country in international affairs, a sharp growth of gasoline prices, the lowering of the dollar exchange rate, a steady stabilization of the situation in the Chechen Republic, and only God knows what else. However, whereas people in Russia drink from idleness, in the Chechen Republic, despite the disasters of the war that stretched over a decade, the picture is a little bit more optimistic: here people try to survive in every possible way. One of the places in Grozny where survival has reached an industrial scale got the name of "labor exchange." Unlike the official body, the Center of Employment and Labor, here nobody will stop your registration after six months or require documents proving your identity or the number of your family members.

Any of the people there will tell you the main thing for them is to receive just any job. All these people have a family, a houseful of children who want to eat and get dressed.

- I've been here since 1995, - says Adam, - I began as mason student. Now I can safely pass for a professional builder. Over these 12 years I tried different construction professions.

- Didn't you have a wish to work at a construction site? After all, it is more reliable to work at a state construction site, they provide a steady salary and social bonuses, - I was trying to suggest another option.

- Once I worked hard there for half a year and I received only five thousand roubles after a three months delay. They didn't even make a record in my work book. The site was frozen because financing stopped, - Adam said without emotions. Then he recollected something personal and added:

- Who would believe now that when I was young I





started with a job in police? I even graduated from a Police School in Baku.

- Perhaps you should get a job in law enforcement? Talk to them, they always need people. They fire people basically for the lack of professionalism.

Having heard this question Adam looked around disturbingly and then asked me with a significant air:

- Where shall I find so much money? Besides, policeman today is the most dangerous profession.

By this Adam let me know that standing here at the exchange in heat and cold is much quieter. And it is hard to disagree with him.

According to statistics, there are almost 80% people in the Chechen Republic like Adam who live from one odd job to another. People manage to survive on casual earnings and scanty grants. They agree to any excessive job. The main thing is they should be paid in time.

Aset M. has always worked somewhere: as a dishwasher, custodian, salesperson, or storekeeper. When there are many children and a disabled husband at home you cannot afford to choose. Now she is mastering a new profession of plasterer and house painter.

In the republic where a lot is being said about revival, there is still nobody to take care of many men and women who ended up at the exchange.

Unemployment is one of the most excruciating problems of the modern world. In each country where it arises, there are objective reasons for it and, according to experts, the major reasons are economic recession and inability of the authorities to provide the population with the necessary amount of jobs. Russia is no exception, and more likely on the contrary: our country can serve as a vivid example of how it is difficult to cope with this trouble. In many regions of Russia the unemployment rate is very high. And in the Chechen Republic that has gone through two destructive wars half of work-age population is unemployed. According to the data of the State Committee of the Chechen Republic on Employment there were 313,976 unemployed in the republic at the end of September, 2007.

It is necessary to note that these official figures can be far from exact as they cover only those who applied for an unemployment grant and receives it, whereas not all apply for it.

The reasons that cause unemployment in the Chechen Republic are the same as across Russia plus the war that has destroyed all the industrial infrastructure of the republic. There used to be well-known factories in the Chechen cities and mountain areas were famous for cattle-breeding farms and ecologically clean agricultural products. These areas that used to be prosperous now show the largest unemployment figures.

Its officially established rate is proba-

bly defined not quite precisely. However, there are other more important things that are associated with it. It is very hard to understand how people can survive on 720 roubles a month while even this little grant is being paid in a rather strange way: an unemployed person receives this grant for 6 months, then payment stops for half a year, and after that it is renewed again. It is no secret that in many Western countries there are unemployed citizens who prefer to live on unemployment grant while informally earning addition money on the side. Many emigrants from the Chechen Republics live there on different grants too. Naturally, now there are new jobs created in the construction industry in the Chechen Republic but their number is too small compared to the big army of unemployed. Besides, these jobs are often temporary.

Speaking of the grants, they can differ in size. For example, those who lost their job for the reasons not dependent on them (staff reduction, company bankruptcy, etc.) receive 75% of the lost salary for one year. Those who left the company voluntarily with a respective record in the work book have the right to a grant of 1,080 roubles.

Deputy Chief of the Department of Employment and Special Programs of the State Committee of the Chechen Republic Lora Tsagalova told me that 103,078 people got a new job in the republic since January 1st, 2007. However, her joyfulness disappeared quickly faced with 313,976 people officially recognized as unemployed, which is a more impressive figure. It is possible to say with confidence that the actual unemployment rate exceeds 70%. Why? Let's look at mountain areas, for example. In Itum-Kalinskiy district with five and a half thousand people population, there are 2,631 people registered as unemployed, i.e. almost all the efficient population. We can observe the same picture in other areas. If in some cities the number of unemployed is below 70%, then it is due to students and office employees. This background makes it clear why there is migration abroad: it is not only the consequence of the wars but also fear of the growing unemployment. Many immigrate to foreign countries not in pursuit of a fantastically beautiful life but simply in expectation of rest and stability.



Dosh #4(18)2007
Lidiya YUSUPOVA

THE BLOOD



Autumn was celebrating its arrival having gilt the crones of the trees. Dead leaves were silently falling down on the ground. The cranes flew high in the sky crying plaintively as though they were saying goodbye to the summer. Women and children were walking along a deserted dusty street with simple belongings in their hands. Beslan saw such scenes quite frequently in recent time. Today he stood for a while at the gate glancing at the sad procession. He was about to return to the house when he heard a scratch of wheels. He looked back and saw a boy of his age or perhaps slightly senior. The teenager was pushing a cart with simple belongings. The weight of the cargo was beyond his forces, drops of sweat were sliding down his face and he was wiping them with the sleeve of the shirt. Beslan rushed to help him. Together they managed to pull the cart on the sidewalk where asphalt survived in places. While helping the boy he cautiously asked:

- Are you alone?

- No, my mom and the little sister are ahead, I need to catch up with them, - he answered chokingly.

The cart rolled easier down the street. At the intersection Beslan said:

- Well, all the best to you. I cannot go further. I've got my mom and the brother at home.

The boy thanked him and hurried to catch up with his family.

Beslan stood and looked how the

OF VICTORY

people were gradually disappearing lit by the crimson beams of sunset. Then he sighed and walked back slowly. Passing by empty houses he thought: why mom and dad do not wish to leave? There was a shivering kitten sitting at the neighbor's fence. Beslan bent down and stroke the kitten. The kitten immediately purred with pleasure in response to caresses. He took this warm lump in his hands and pressed to his chest when he suddenly heard the rumble of approaching planes. Still holding the kitten Beslan ran into the yard. The mother was collecting vegetables in a small garden. The kid was standing beside her on his weak feet grasping the mother by the hem. The roar of the planes was approaching threateningly. The mother shouted that the children should get into the house. Beslan put the kitten on his shoulder, grasped the kid with both hands and rushed to the house. The brother resisted and shouted. The kitten seized his shirt and hung behind the back...

Beslan almost reached the doorstep when a terrible force pushed him in the back and threw him into the room. Still holding the kid he instinctively crawled away from the open door to the corner where the kitten landed thrown by a blast wave. He pressed both the kid and the kitten to himself trying to cover them with his slim little body. The earth shuddered from explosions. The air was filled with the whistle of splinters, the roar of planes, and the clink of broken windowpanes. Beslan tried to close the door and to hide from this nightmare but the door hopelessly clapped and

deadly blows followed one another outside. The child was crying. He tried to calm him down and shouted in attempt to outcrie the roar:

- Mom! Mom!

The terrified kitten rushed under the bed. Beslan continued to embrace the crying brother and himself began to cry. It seemed there would be no end to this awful roar. He did not know how long it lasted and did not at once realize when silence fell at last.

There was something ominous in this silence. He listened attentively for a few minutes and only then got up to his feet. He lifted the brother and slowly moved to the open door. At the doorstep he stopped looking for the kitten. There were fragments of broken tiles from the roof, window frames and splinters of broken glass everywhere.

The mother sat leaning against the wall of the house. Beslan called:

- Mom!

The woman did not move. Staring right into her face the boy went towards her with the brother on his hands. He called again. His voice was lower and shivering: "Mom... Mom!" Everything became cold inside him and he suddenly began to shiver from top to toe. Without realizing what he was doing he put the child down on the ground and rushed towards her. A bloody stain blurred on her breast. The brother choked with crying but Beslan did not hear him: he himself shouted loudly: "Mom!" He suddenly calmed down.

He stretched his hands to the face of

the mother and began to stroke gently removing twisted locks of her hair from the cheeks. He silently whispered: "Mom... Mom!" He was hoping for a miracle. He felt that he was suffocating. "Oh, God! Oh, God!" He embraced her and begun to cry bitterly inhaling the mother's last warmth mixed with the smell of blood. She sat as if she was having rest slightly bending the head on one side. She did not hear the children crying, did not feel these lean hands that embraced her in a crazy hope that she would respond.

The kid tried to crawl to the mother and wounded his hands with glass splinters. His face smeared with blood and dirt and full of tears expressed horror.

Having heard the children crying, the neighbor ran into the yard and was petrified:

- Oh, Allah, help him! Help him!

Someone's hands took off Beslan from his motionless mother. As if in a fog he saw the face of his father. The earth was departing from under his feet. The boy slowly and unsteadily walked towards the house. He almost reached the door and turned back. The few remaining neighbors gathered at the body of the mother. The thought about the kitten suddenly emerged from the depths of his consciousness.

Shrinking from unstoppable ice fever he entered into the room. He called: "Kitty-kitty-kitty!" Exhausted he lowered down on the floor, buried his face in the knees but he could not cope with the shiver. A light touch on

the cheek, soft and fluffy, got him out of catalepsy for an instant. He cautiously took the kitten into his shivering hands with clotted blood of the mother and began to cry.

At nights he used to bury his face in the pillow and, so that the father could not see him, he silently cried embracing the kid with one hand and the kitten with the other. He kept crying while his soul of a child was falling into drowsiness and thus, for a short time could release the unbearable burden.

They spent days and nights in the cramped basement under the summer kitchen.

Aircraft roar and explosions could often be heard there. At these sounds all inside turned cold with the already familiar treacherous shiver. Not to give out his condition, he clenched his palms into fists, strained the muscles of his entire body, and alternatively stiffened and relaxed. During the minutes of quietness the father left the house and the three of them remained together: Beslan, the brother and the kitten. The fear that something could happen to the father did not abandon him now. The father used to bring flat cakes baked by the neighbor, sometimes they were hot. With his eyes closed Beslan slowly inhaled the smell of bread. The mother instantly emerged in the memory and the soul filled with silent joy. He pictured a spring day and a delicate aroma of blossoming apple and apricot trees that mixed with that unique smell from an open window in the kitchen: mom was baking bread. Hanging on the window sill he asked her for a hot flat cake. She tenderly rebuked him but he was in a hurry because his friends were waiting for him, they should finish their football game. He also heard the mother's voice but it disappeared somewhere

and sounded from far away...

It was difficult to breathe again and the boy squeezed the flat cake in his hand constraining tears. There was twilight in the basement. The only patches of light came from the fire through the slightly opened door of the iron furnace and threw light on the people who huddled there. He crumbled the flat cake into a bowl, added milk and put it before the kitten.

Having finished their humble meal they all went to bed. The father rested himself on the earthen floor with the kid beside him. They embraced each other and fell asleep to the murmur of the kitten that joined them to the music of war.

One day the father went out to bring some fire wood. Beslan was sitting with his brother on a wooden board and cautiously listening. There was something frightening in the silence that reigned outside. A sudden fear seized him. He climbed up a small ladder and looked out. There was nothing outside. Panic was increasing in his soul. The father had never been so late... He whispered to himself driving away evil thoughts: "Oh, God, do not let disaster happen! Do not let disaster happen!"

The kid got hungry and began asking to eat. A piece of a cold flat cake calmed him down for a short while. Beslan was helplessly searching in the darkness trying to find something that could entertain the kid. He felt the father's beads.

Again and again the boy climbed up the small ladder to see whether the father was returning. The day was coming to an end. The silence was pressing. He could hardly put to bed the crying brother and spent the night in waiting and listening to every rustle outside. At daybreak he was overcome with sleep. He woke up to the shout of the kid. Some unknown force was shaking the basement

here and there. Everything roared outside. In confusion he seized the brother and embraced him. Through the open hatch he saw how the ceiling in the room above the basement burst. The crack extended exposing the smashed ceiling. The ceiling lamp was shaking and somberly ringing its pieces of glass on one half of the ceiling. Beslan was numb with horror and stared at the hole in the ceiling. It was growing. The grey December sky was looking at the boy through the hole...

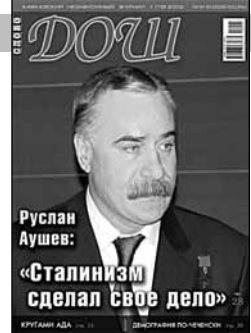
And then he cried: "Oh, Allah the Almighty!"

Through the hell on earth, among the roar of shells and bombs and the groaning of falling houses the lonely voice of a child was pushing to the sky.

The war took away his childhood, his parents, and his brother. Yes, and the brother too. It took away everything that he loved so much. He would never say "Mom!" again. Everyone who would glance into his face will see a still mask and will shudder because so much deep grief is in these eyes. He has a look of an old man. He forgot how to smile because the war killed joy in him. His life was meanly and irreparably deformed. Will he ever be able at least sometimes, in his dreams, in a childish way, to fly up into the blue cloudless pre-war sky again?

And the winners celebrate somewhere out there. They vigorously shake each others hands empurpled with the blood of the innocent. They generously distribute awards and medals to the heroes. They triumph. Over whom? Nobody has a wish to go deep into this question. And the stench is creeping all around the immense space of the country getting into all its most remote corners. It is the spirit of this poor victory.

THE CIRCLES OF HELL



Dosh #1(19)2008
Usam BAISAEV

What happened in the Chechen Republic a year, two or more years ago continues to happen today, it is not new or unusual. Our history has a strange feature to repeat itself not only in general but also in details, even in the smallest details. It is as if we wander in a dark room looking for the door. We stumble over the table, overturn chairs, and smash our head with all the force against a concrete wall. We'd rather take some rest, get used to darkness, and consider and weigh everything. Even if we stop, we do it, having accumulated an even greater rage, only to continue whirling in the dark hell... Someone, I do not remember who, said about us, the Chechens, that we are the people with a burning sense of memory. Having read these words I thought how precisely that person could understand and define our essence. I myself could never think of it. I simply lived, worked, and got interested in the past getting information about it from a very limited number of sources. Those who lived in Soviet times should understand what I mean. For

me it was normal and I never thought that for someone else who speaks another language since birth all can be in a different way both with regard to my own life and with regard to history which, by and large, is already the life of our parents.

This unbreakable chain - from the son to the father, from him to the grandfather and further on to more ancient ancestors - made me the participant of the events of a long history. In fact, I am also from there and everything that happened then also happened with me. I do not know what others feel but for me it was a natural feeling. That is why I felt pity for the people and I felt sad for myself when in my childhood I heard the stories about the exile, how people lived and died far away from our native land and how people, when they returned after all losses and humiliations, were forced to ask for permission to dig dugouts in their own yards from unknown people who had come from nowhere. In fact, the same was done with me. It turns out that it was me who had been thrown in mud, me whose future life was turned into misery. Was it me only?





The sense of great injustice, the memory of humiliations, and the blood with which our land showered more than with oil were that explosive that in September, 1991 threw away the authorities that existed then in the republic. Neither planted provocateurs (who afterwards were blamed for all the troubles), nor anything else could ever move people to the streets and put in their mouths the demand for independence. This could only be caused by the hurt feelings for the parents (and therefore, for us) and by the open wound that has lodged in our hearts forever. It also became the starting point of our present tragic condition.

These bitter thoughts visited me when I learned about another propaganda action undertaken by our zealous republican officials. I am talking about renaming a street in Grozny in honor of the Russian commandos who had been killed far from the city. I will not be evaluating their heroism. There have already been different views of it, at times mutually exclusive, expressed in articles written even not by the Chechens. I am interested in something else, namely the logic of actions of the authorities. Where is this logic? What meaning is attached to this action? Perhaps it is so deep that

neither I, nor many with whom I discussed it can comprehend it so that I could perhaps accept it? But nobody is telling us anything. They simply gave us the bear fact: the 9th Line Street will henceforth be called Street Named after the Pskov Commandos. And that is all! Now live with it.

And it is not an ordinary street that was renamed. This street is located in Staropromyslovskiy district. It is the very same district where in January and February, 2000 monstrous crimes were committed for which nobody has been punished yet. It is here where heads were the chopped off, bellies of pregnant women were ripped up and people were burned alive. I say nothing of those who were simply shot. They were mostly old men and women, and not only the Chechens, the enemy as a matter of fact, but also the Ingushs, the Russians, and the Armenians...

The orgy of permissiveness wiped out the whole families. The family of Said Zubaev, for example, who lived near this vicious 9th Line. In his yard only nine people were killed. His grand daughter, a teenager, beautiful Rumisa (before her eyes and the eyes of her seven-year old little sister the soldiers shot everyone whom she loved in her life) was put on an armored troop-carrier and taken away. It is still unknown where she might be now. Poor relatives keep searching for her in hopes that she is perhaps the only one who managed to survive. They even sent a request to "Wait for me" program that runs on Russian TV. But there is no news. Because the relatives do not want to believe the story published by human rights activists in one of their books that testifies to an astonishingly cruel murder of a girl from Staropromyslovskiy district that occurred approximately at the same time. Since there is no corpse, it means she is still alive...

This face-saving formula has become a compass in the painful, years-long search of the disappeared inhabitants of the republic. But this search will hardly be successful. In the same Staropromyslovskiy district where murders occurred not one day and not one week but almost a month, there was nobody left to remove the dead bodies. Anyone who appeared in the view of the soldiers who plundered and set houses on fire could be killed. Many were killed under these circumstances. Their bodies remained there and were picked up to the bones by wild dogs and cats. It was a great joy if people managed to identify the body of a close relative thanks to the remaining clothes because all the other things, such as rings, earrings or gold teeth, prior to beasts proper had been picked up by beasts in camouflage.

It was not possible to identify, for example, an elderly woman in a wheelchair who was killed near the garages close to the 9th Line. She did not have half of the head which had been torn off by a burst from a submachine gun and the remains of the body were eaten up to the bones by cats. The archaic wheelchair served its owner well during her lifetime but could not help her after her death: there was nobody left who could tell who this wheelchair used to belong. Two young girls risked their lives and buried the woman and the wheelchair. By doing so they gave a chance for a possible





identification in the future because the soldiers burned corpses to cover up.

The alive were also burned. Before the eyes of the mother who eventually became insane, they threw into the cellar and set on fire sisters Shema and Shaiman Inderbiev. In the beginning of February their third sister Deshi collected their remains into two pillowcases and tried to drive through Ingushetia to the cemetery in the village of Valerik. She was detained at the "Caucasus" checkpoint. The police saw the horrifying cargo and called FSB officers who attempted to arrest the girl. "Be human, allow me to bury the sisters," - the girl tried to appeal to their conscience...

All this happened on the 9th Line, which henceforth is offered to us to be called the Street Named after the Pskov Commandos, or near it: on the 5th Line, the 8th Line, or Shefskaya Street. Sure, it was not them because there were in the mountains at that time but the same Russian soldiers, wearing the same insignia and with the same names Petya, Vasya and Igor, who fulfilled the orders given by the same generals with the surnames well-known to us and who stood behind these murders. Why should they be given such honor? No, not exactly. Why should there be such disgrace to us? Aren't our dead human? Didn't they have the right to live? Didn't we love them? Are we unable to suffer?

To shred into pieces, to burn, to feed to wild animals, and then finally to insult the memory of the dead and to pour poison on the unhealed hearts of the alive... Was it impossible not to do this, this last thing, really? Or, perhaps it is much simpler. Just like during Soviet

times with the same monument to General Alexey Ermolov. To keep it in the capital of the republic whose people he promised to destroy, extinguish with famine and by weapons and he did it quite successfully, is, at first sight, an awful nonsense. But the authorities saw a different logic in it. It seemed to them that another reminder of the fact that that people had been subdued and that it did not have any rights, except for the right to submit, will not be too much. Had it not been for their stubbornness there would be no such tragic subsequent developments in the Northern Caucasus? It all, in fact, began with the demolition of the monument to the hated general.

The people who made this decision to rename the street should have thought of the feelings of those for whom they stand first of all. There is a watershed between the Chechens and the Russian state. It exists whether we like it or not. There were wars and there were murders, and mostly if not always we were not guilty of them. But the main thing is, and it is clear, that all the same there will be no street with such name in Grozny. There will be other streets. For example, a street named after Ayzan Amirova who was found by her husband in a cellar with the ripped up belly from which their unborn child fell out. Or a street named after Adlan Akaev, PhD, chairman of the department of physics of Grozny Pedagogical Institute. The murderers did not even bother to check

his passport because if they did they would definitely have taken the money inserted in it. Or a street named after Rumisa Zubaeva who at the age of 14 learnt the real meaning of hell and vanished afterwards. If not today, it will all happen tomorrow, and if not in a year, then five years from now. Because Russia is the same, it is destined to democracy. The time is, in fact, different now and the world is not the same any more.

And if we shall not do it, then it will be done by our children. The Chechens are the people with a burning sense of memory! In fact, we do not forget anything and the memory about our dead is always sacred for us. And there is nothing to hide here: we are not able to forgive, especially the mockery of the dead bodies.

A young man with a nickname Stalker wrote on one of the Chechen forums: "To estimate the future on the basis of the present is not the most successful approach. We know how often the life throws our people out of the frying pan into the fire. So there is no future. We live in the present."

However, the future is still formed in the present. It means that the next generation of the Chechens who live with the pain for the humiliations experienced by their parents and for their life that had been ruined before their birth is destined to wander in the same dark room in search of the door...

P.S. When this article was already written and the issue was about to be printed, it was thought that the 9th Line in Tashkala would be renamed. Eventually it was Zhigulevskaya Street in the same Staropromyslovskiy district that received the name of the Pskov Commandos. It turned out even worse: the action to "perpetuate the memory of the defenders of the integrity of Russia" was organized exactly on that place where peaceful civilians had been shot. In his speech the Deputy Governor of Pskov region Viktor Gitin said: "It is especially important that the Chechen people did not forget about those fighters who gave their lives for peace on the Chechen land." Indeed, the Chechen people did not forget and will hardly ever forget...



RETURNING

Dosh #1(19)2008
Lidiya YUSUPOVA

In a small cellar there were two girls sitting next to each other. A weak light of a candle could hardly illuminate their faces distorted by fear. Pushes from explosions continually forced them to squeeze convulsively. They were both silently crying. Suddenly a small door of the cellar opened with a bang and a stream of incoming air put out the candle. The earth was shuddering from bomb explosions. The children began to cry loudly not concealing their fear any more. A shivering female voice whispered worthless words of consolation in reply.

- Auntie, shall we leave?

The woman nodded with a heavy sigh.

Like a black winding tape the road escaped from under the wheels of the car. The fallen asleep houses shrouded by the fog and deserted streets were flying by. Seda turned back. The girls were asleep leaning on elbow over the bag with their belongings.

It took an hour to reach Ingushetia. They came to stay with their friends from Grozny. Other refugees found shelter in this street and in neighboring streets. The owners of the houses huddled together with them and shared everything that they had.

Every morning Seda walked to Nazran. There she stood in a long line to get to the trailers of the Federal Migration Service to get an exit permit that would allow her to leave the republic. Finally she obtained all the required papers. The next day she came to the train station together with the children. It took an effort to get a seat in a car compartment.

The train was gaining speed. The train attendant, an elderly woman with a swollen face, announced loudly that there would be no stops through Mineralnye Vody.

An elderly man sat next to Seda and the children.



There was an 8 years old girl with him. She studied her fellow travelers with a long look and then introduced herself:

- My name is Kheda.

- And my name is Fatima, - one of Seda's nieces reacted briskly.

- I am Kheda too, - said the second niece.

After introduction the children moved to a vacant shelf and started talking vigorously about something.

Seda was silently looking out the window. She recollected her mother's stories about the eviction, about the 1940s. "Winters here are just like in Kazakhstan." - "Mom, tell me how you managed to survive there," - Seda asked. - "What can I tell? We lived with only one dream to return home," - the woman responded with a sigh and continued: "The soldiers came at dawn and ordered to pack our belongings quickly. I woke up the brother. He was 14 years old and I was 16. There were only the two of us at home. Mom had been taken away earlier and we did not know where she was... One of the soldiers began to shout at the brother because he was slowly putting on his clothes and raised a rifle at him. I could not think what to take. Then an officer came in. He stopped the soldier and told me: "Daughter, take warm clothes, take food, the road will be long." Then he left. I quickly collected what I could. Then they put us and our belongings on carts and escorted to the railway station. There they put us in the cars in which cattle is usually transported. They were narrow and it was impossible not only to sit but even to stand. The train took off. We soon lost count of days. It was a long journey. Occasionally the train stopped, they pulled out the sick people out of the car. Through a crack in the car we saw how they threw the dead into the snow. They did not allow us to leave the cars. Many did not survive and died, among them were children and women... Then we began to hide the bodies. We did not show them to the

soldiers and carried them all the way with us. We thought that sooner or later we would bring them somewhere and bury there..."

The girl was standing at the door of the compartment and listening anxiously. The second Kheda, their new friend, interfered in the conversation:

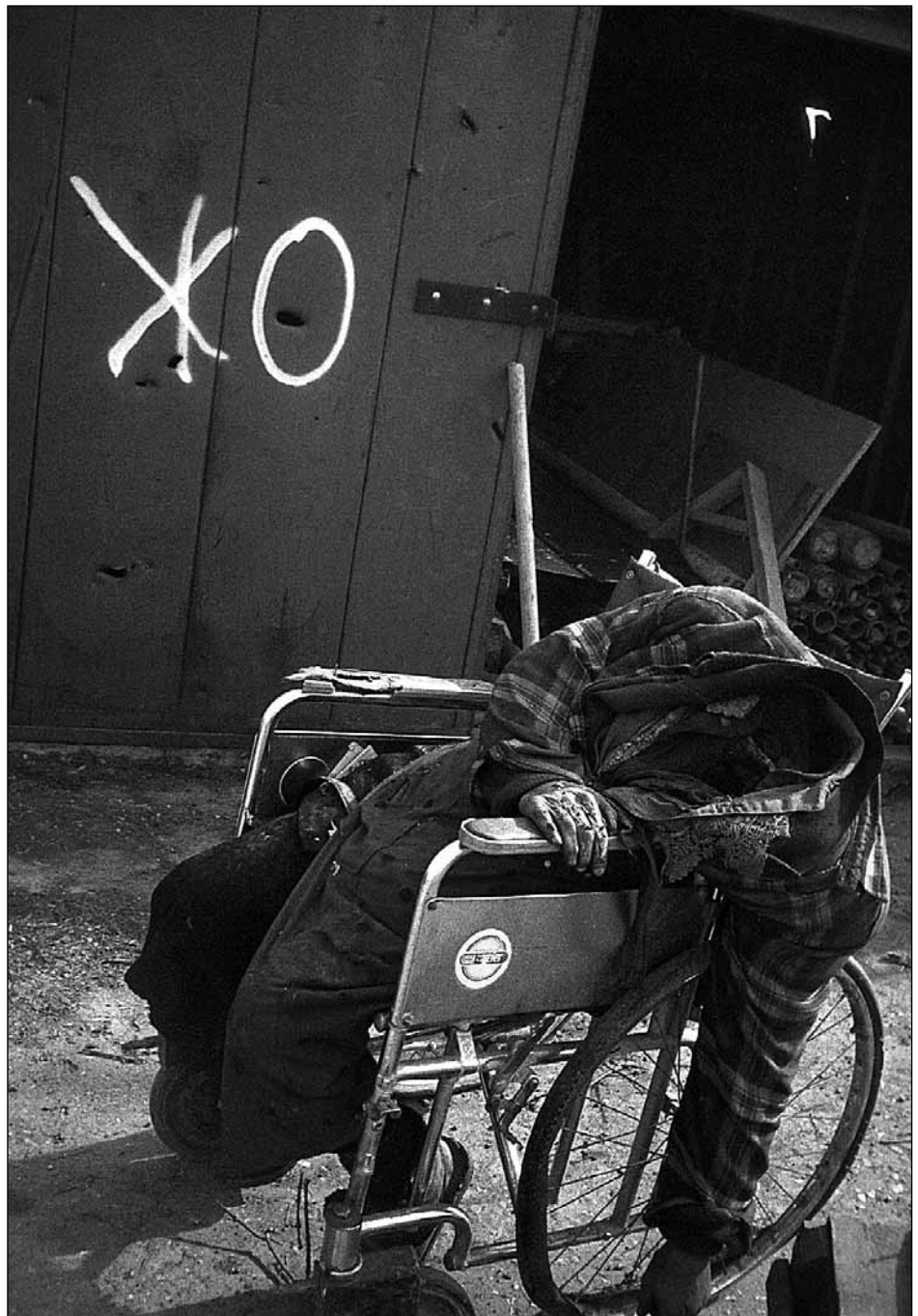
- Auntie, while you were away, policemen came here and asked if there were any adults with us. I said that I travel with you. If I tell them that I travel with uncle Seryezha, they can take

me away. In fact I am no relation to him. He is Russian and I am Chechen.

"Uncle Seryezha" was nervously looking around in the corridor.

- Please say that the girl is travelling with you, - he asked Seda in a low voice, - I am taking her to my relatives in Pyatigorsk, we used to be neighbors. Her parents are wounded and her mother asked me to take her away.

He handed the girl's birth certificate. Seda nodded.



A police major and a civilian person entered into the compartment. The major asked to show the documents on the children and copied Seda's passport information.

The civilian screamed:

- Where is the letter of attorney regarding the children?

Seda looked at him but said nothing.

- What letter of attorney? They have just got out from hell! - protested the major.

But the civilian insisted:

- If there is no letter of attorney, then we shall take away the children from you.

Seda left the children to the care of her relatives and returned to Ingushetia. The way back home to Grozny was not supposed to be easy.

The road to the Chechen Republic was closed. Every morning Seda walked to the checkpoint at the exit from Nazran. Hundreds of people crowded here also trying to get to Grozny or at least to learn something about their relatives who remained in the Chechen Republic.

She could see the tired faces of hungry men and women who got chilled to the bone while waiting long hours. The children were crying. Groans and shouts could be heard from different

checkpoint of Federal Migration Service. All the passengers had to leave the buses. The bags remained on the seats. The soldiers with dogs began to check them. They took away passports and announced that people could get them back in the window of the trailer. The people formed a line. The FMS officers required detailed information from each passenger. They searched their names and surnames in a computer database. Those who passed the check successfully got their documents back and were allowed to return to the bus.

Such stops occurred frequently. Each time the checks detained the buses for several hours. They reached the



The girls were numb and fearfully exchanged glances

- Do not pretend that you take care of the children. You bomb them day and night! - Seda could hardly constrain her anger.

To avoid the conflict, the major slammed his folder and muttered "Case closed!" He returned the documents and left together with his partner.

Late at night the train arrived in Mineralnye Vody. The police examined the luggage and documents.

directions. But the road was tightly blocked by the federal troops. Having achieved nothing out of long waiting people went back home in the dark to those who gave them shelter in Ingushetia.

Seda was exhausted from uncertainty. Every new step was even harder to make. Nevertheless, she walked to the checkpoint every day. Only two weeks later, during the first week of November, several buses arrived here. Instantly the buses got jam-packed with people, mostly women.

Soon they were stopped at the first

village of Asinovskaya only by seven o'clock in the evening. There were two passenger cars that travelled together with the buses. Later Seda learned from a conversation among the women that in one of these cars there was an old man who asked to let him see the land of his ancestors before death. When they reached Asinovskaya and the old man was told that he was in the Chechen Republic his soul found eternal rest by sunrise.

The line road was jammed with traffic. Grad rocket launchers were doing their job without rest on both sides of

the road. Their salvos were shaking the ground.

Seda was moving with this human stream unconsciously. Sleet was falling and she got chilled up to the bone.

Seda kept walking but she did not understand what she was searching for. She was shivering though she did not feel the cold.

- How nice that I saw you! - Mariam, a neighbor from Grozny, called Seda. - Are you going home? Let's go together.

They agreed to set out next morning. They did not expect any transportation, so they had to go on foot.

They decided to settle for the night in an empty house. The owners hastily abandoned it to escape from bombings. Now in the rooms there were refugees from the crowd that was creeping along the road.

Seda didn't get a wink of sleep all night waiting for the dawn. The morning was gloomy and foggy. Together with Mariam she was on the road again. The road was a never-ending flow of cars and trucks loaded with household items, fowl and animals. They were waiting for someone to take pity and allow them access to Ingushetia.

She could read torment, bitter grief and hopelessness on the grey faces of the refugees. She walked as if in a dream. The friends who she met on her way were trying to convince her not to return to the city. They told that the city was bombed day and night and the residents had abandoned Grozny.

The women were persistent and continued their journey. The thought that her native house was close was warming her soul.

November was surprisingly warm and sunny.

Under the roar of bombardments and airstrikes the remaining residents of Grozny moved to live in cellars and basements. In the beginning of winter



bombardment and shelling intensified. Heavy bombing often occurred during the moments of prayers. The attacks calmed down for half an hour and then resumed again.

In December it became very cold. The soldiers blew up gas lines and warmth disappeared from houses. To get warm, people started to cut trees and disassembled and burned wooden fences.

One day at the end of December a massive bombardment began at dawn. Everything around was on fire and falling down. Blast waves knocked out window frames and doors. Tiles flew up from the roofs and the ground was shaking.

Seda and her sister rushed out of the house to hide themselves in a small cellar which could not protect them from a direct hit but could save them from splinters.

Suddenly it became silent. The internal voice prompted that now something terrible would happen.

Seda turned to the sister:

- Let's say goodbye and forgive each other, - she did not finish speaking when there came a deafening explosion, then another one, even more powerful...

It seemed as if unknown forces were coming from under the ground and tear-

ing it into pieces. She heard the rumble of aircraft and new salvos of ground artillery. It last for several infinite hours.

Seda came out of the cellar. Splinters of tiles, broken glass, pieces of destroyed walls and tumbled down trees were everywhere. Pity pieces of wires were hanging from power line poles. Houses were burning, animals were roaring, and people were shouting.

There were soldiers marching along the street. Armored personnel-carriers were rolling. Looking at this Seda recollected the movies about the Great Patriotic War. For an instant everything happening seemed to her as if she was watching a movie.

Soldiers in dirty clothes were breaking into empty houses and in a rage were dragging everything that could come handy. The protests of the residents were answered with loud dirty swearing.

Military units made a camp behind the village on a hill. Every morning a column of armored vehicles passed along the street in the direction of downtown.

Combat action there never stopped.

Once Seda dared to go to the neighboring village where her relatives lived.

She passed by the mosque and began to cross the road. She noticed several dead bodies of men near the garages. Suddenly she felt a hot wave against her face and several bullets whistled.

"If they wanted to kill, they would have killed. I need to turn back, let them think that I got Scared."

A week later Seda decided to go to the village again, this time together with Mariam. They managed to pass safely the open space. There was not a single undamaged house in the street. They could see grave hills in some yards. In a side street they noticed an old woman who was hiding behind an undamaged brick fence.

- Do not go any further, - she warned wiping her tears, - There are soldiers there, they shoot both women and men. Yesterday they killed everyone in that house.

Seda entered into the yard covered by sleeves and cloths stained with blood. She glanced in one of the windows and froze.

All the walls were splashed with blood. Dead bodies were near the walls. She wanted to enter but stopped. There could be mines inside.

- They wanted to kill me and my old man too, - the old woman said, - but one soldier said that they had

enough. Well, they went away. They took away a few of our things. Now other soldiers come here and plunder every day. But do not touch us.

She sighed and added:

- Once they evicted us, we were dying of famine and cold but they at least did not throw bombs at us.

Seda was silent for a moment and then said:

- In those times they needed the bombs for the fascists and now they have no place to store them. So they decided to spend them on us...

Nevertheless, Seda and Mariam managed to get to the house of her relatives. But the street was deserted. All the houses were completely destroyed.

Among the ruins they noticed a wheelchair. There was a killed woman sitting in it.

It was dangerous to bury her today. After 15 o'clock snipers fired at everything that moved.

- Let's return tomorrow.



DEMOGRAPHY

THE CHECHEN WAY



Dosh #1(19)2008

Malika BETIEVA

Today the demographic situation in the Chechen Republic is considered to be stable. Moreover, here we observe the highest increase in population. The Chechen republic shows the highest population growth rate not only across the Northern Caucasus but also in all of Russia. It seems rather optimistic. However, there is one essential thing that spoils this picture: alongside the high birth rate in the Chechen Republic, infant mortality rate is also high.

Until recently this theme was not discussed at all. More precisely, it was not exposed at the republican level. Not because there was no cause for trouble.

Simply there was no uniform database that could allow monitoring this situation.

Physicians of maternity hospitals were the first to ring the bell. The number of newborn babies with various pathologies grew in a geometrical progression. The situation reached its apogee when statistical data for 2007 was printed in press. According to this data, the infant mortality rate in the Chechen Republic grew up 3.9% compared to the previous year and exceeded the country average by 1.6 times.

In the opinion of experts, the growth of early neonatal and neonatal mortality rate is directly connected with the deterioration of health condition of pregnant women, heavy pregnancy and congenital pathology.

Officials from the Ministry of Health Care of the Chechen Republic have their own view of this issue. Major factors contributing to the growth of infant mortality rate, in their opinion, are the heavy social,

economic and ecological situation, a low level of the material base in hospitals, late visits to women's consultations, and also the shortage midwives and obstetricians.

In December of last year, the Minister of Health Care of the Chechen Republic Shakhid Akhmadov expressed the opinion that the figure of 3.9% was probably not exact. He assumed that it could be even higher. The matter is that the Chechen Republic was only recently included in the uniform register of statistical data of the Russian Federation. Therefore, not all data has been processed yet.

According to the republican Ministry of Health Care, the highest infant mortality rates are registered in Shatoy, Nozhay-Yurt and Gudermes districts and in the city of Argun. This rate is also high in Nadterechniy district (from





about 9.6% in 2006 it increased to 25.4% in 2007, i.e. by 2.6 times), in Achkhoy-Maratnovskiy district (from 7.9% up to 30.2%, i.e. by 3.8 times) and in the city of Argun (from 8.8% up to 32.0%. i.e. by 3.6 times).

According to the Ministry of Health Care of the Chechen Republic, 31.5% of babies died at home last year. Experts confirm that the causes of it are negative socio-economic factors, acute deficiency of pediatric staff and an insufficient level of medical aid at the pre-hospital stage. However, to make the full analysis of infant mortality rate now is impossible for two reasons: the absence of morbid anatomy services and religious bans.

To reduce maternal and infant mortality, as confirmed by physicians, efforts at the state level are necessary.

This need was also expressed at one of the sessions of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy of the Council of the Republic. The head of the Committee Aslambek Aidamirov said that the issue of protection of women's and children's health is the "most burning" today. Infant mortality rate in 2006 was 18.4 for a thousand people and for the first 9 months of 2007 it increased to 19.2.

Alla Makhtieva, Chief pediatrician of the Republic, thinks that the growth of infant mortality rate is caused by the

fact that 80-90% of women of reproductive age suffer from anemia and 20-30% from a heavy form of anemia. High levels of toxicoes and heavy forms of gestosis cause heavy and operative delivery.

In her opinion, another important factor is the absence of a versatile hospital with specialized divisions in the republic. Children's sanatoria and dairy kitchens do not function. There are no specialized hospitals for treating children suffering from tuberculosis, no branches for premature babies and pathologies of newborns. Over five thousand children and women are sent to specialized clinics outside the republic every year.

According the Chief Pediatrician, health and demographic parameters are also influenced by the growth of tuberculosis, the use of drugs, a low level of a labor safety, and the deterioration of food quality.

According to statistics provided by Makhtieva, many women have at least two or three chronic diseases. These are problems of blood circulation, breath, digestion, mental frustration and gynecologic diseases.

Aslambek Aidamirov added that the high infant mortality rate is a direct consequence of a critical level of environmental contamination. Scientists of the Chechen State University conducted a research proving that the level of

mutation of plants exceeds 10.2 times in the settlements where there had been an environmental contamination by products of oil refining, benzpyrene and heavy metals.

In the opinion of members of Parliament, to solve all these problems, it is necessary to produce effective recommendations which would allow improving the demographic situation in the republic. In particular, it is necessary to make changes to the national priority project "Health": to provide free-of-charge services in the field of extracorporal fertilization; full medical examination of pregnant women registered with women's consultations; to create genetic consultations in all settlements; to renew obligatory routine medical inspections of the population; to strengthen sanitary education; and to monitor the realization of the national project. Besides, the members of Parliament insist on the necessity to accept a national program which would allow improving the ecological conditions in the republic.

The solution of all these problems can change the situation in the Chechen Republic. Moreover, it will allow stopping the growth of mortality rate. On June 23rd, there was a charitable marathon "Health of the Nation" in Grozny. All the money collected during this event, 35 million roubles, will be spent on treatment of children suffering from cardiac anomalies.

ROSTOV DOCTORS AND THEIR CHECHEN PATIENTS

Patients from the Chechen Republic consider the Rostov doctors as almost miracle makers. Askhab Vakhaev, a 5 years old resident of the village of Chiri-Yurt near Grozny arrived in Rostov for the first time. Alas, it was not a tourist trip. The boy had cancer. He came for surgery. The doctors removed a tumor on his left temple.

His mother Zargan was really happy that they could get to Rostov. The doctors in the Chechen Republic told her that if the operation had to be made in a local hospital, the boy could have become blind.

The Rostov Oncologic Research Institute accepts over ten thousand patients from Southern Federal District and some other regions every year. Approximately one tenth of all patients are residents of the Chechen Republic. Over the past three years the number of patients who arrive from the republic for treatment in Rostov increased 1,100 to 1,500 people.

The number of cancer patients in the former zone of "counterterrorist operation" increases every year. More and more children in the Chechen cities and villages become victims of monstrous illnesses. Malignant tumors are often detected in young women and men. The causes become clear when you realize what conditions these people lived in over the past years: disgusting ecology, radiation that is mysteriously poisoning the republic, explosions, bombardments, famine, and the absence of electricity and heat. The system of public health services was destroyed and it is impossible to perform exact diagnosis timely. And there is another direct consequence of the war: stress and depression.

Galina Nerodo, Deputy Director of the Institute, told us:

- When the war started in the Chechen Republic, the director issued an order allowing priority acceptance of people from there without any appointment day or night. Many women after treatment in our Department of Gynecology tell their friends about their impressions. Information about us is passed by word of mouth. Many who learned about the Institute from girlfriends, neighbors or relatives come to us.

"Danger: Radiation!"

It is a warning sign on the doors of the Department of Radiology. Ilyas Elmurzaev is taking here a repeated course of treatment. He speaks in a gentle voice as if he is whispering. It all started with a usual cough. The doctors in the Chechen Republic told him it was bronchitis. So, Ilyas was treated for bronchitis until his shoulders, the neck and the face became swollen. When he arrived in Rostov, the doctors diagnosed cancer. The top part of the right lung was obviously dim. The salary of the 46 years old driver of postal service was hardly sufficient to pay for his hospitalization. His wife Petimat Arsambaeva who is constantly in hospital with him told us:

- In our village of Gvardeyskoye of Nadterechniy district, there are cancer patients in every family, sometime two cancer patients in one household. How one can remain healthy? There was no electricity and gas in the district for a year. Instead there were explosions, radiation and waste of oil refining factories in the atmosphere. While the war was on, we lived in constant fear though the village was not bombarded. There were only military helicopters flying very low above the houses and frightening people.

To rescue one's life and to protect the family were the main goal during wartime. Health could wait.

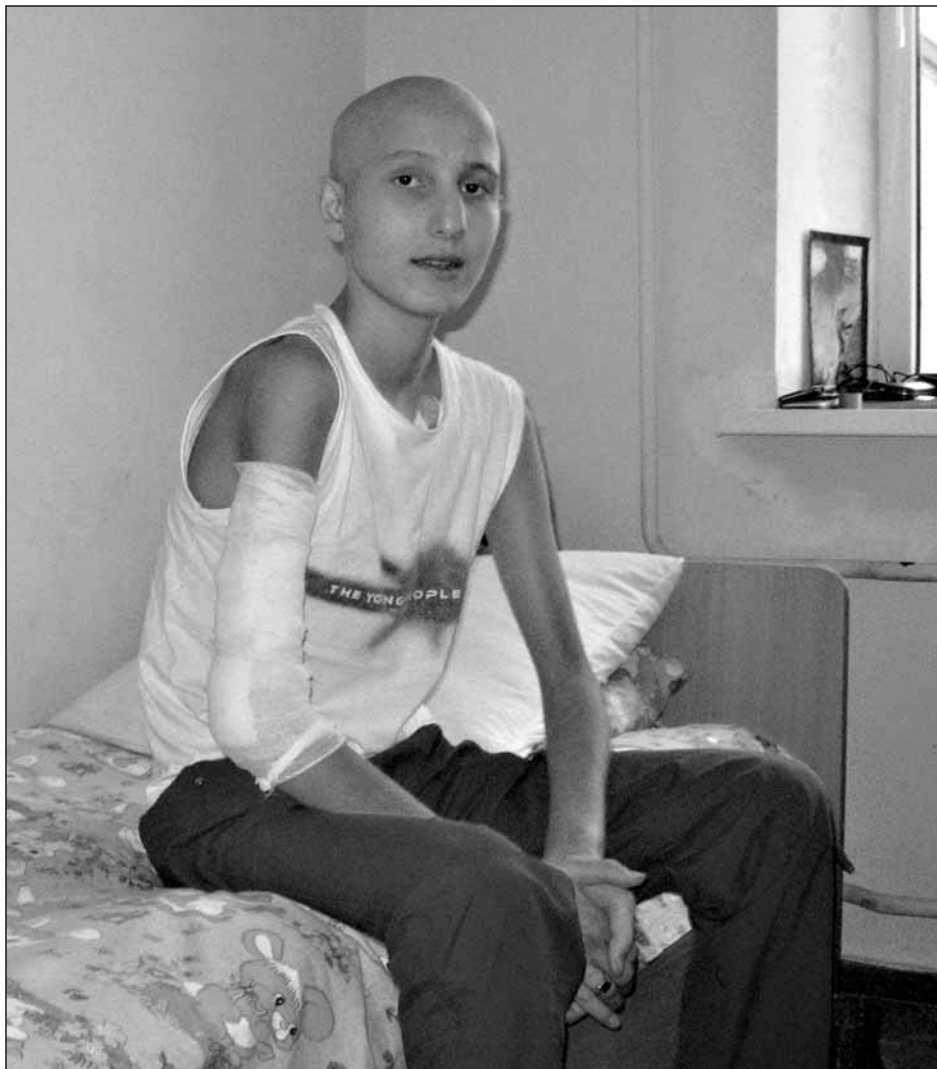
Farkhad Dzhabarov, Chief of the Department of Radiology, explained to us:



Dosh #1(19)2008

Lydia MIKHALCHENKO





Polyclinic

The polyclinic of the Rostov Oncology Institute is the first Department that accepts absolutely all. Here people are registered and diagnosed. Larissa Vashchenko, Director of the polyclinic, told us:

- We provide radiologic, computer, ultrasonic, and morphologic testing to diagnose the patient or to exclude an erroneous earlier diagnosis, then we send the patient for further treatment. Patients from the Chechen Republic get here on a stretcher more often than others. Many women of reproductive age suffer from infertility. When you ask them why did not turn to a doctor earlier, they answer that there had no place to go.

"They grow up quickly here"

Julia Kozel, Chief of Children's Department says that over two thirds of her patients are from the Chechen Republic. They come with system diseases of neck and stomach lymph nodes. We often observe neuroblastomas, Wilms tumors, and kidney and brain tumors. There are many hematologic patients and patients with acute leukemia. There are also congenital illnesses. Children with such anamnesis were treated for three or four months at home in the Chechen Republic, they were observed there, they were taking antibiotics and courses of physical therapy by nothing helped. It was only when they came here it was found out that they had a malignant tumor.

- Recently we had a 16 years old girl from the Chechen Republic. She had an open form of tuberculosis and rectal cancer. She was first directed to a tuberculosis clinic where she was cured of tuberculosis. Then she came to us for surgery. First we removed the tumor and then performed a reconstructive surgery.

When we speak about children, the doctors are facing another problem: elementary misunderstanding. Many children from the Chechen Republic almost do not speak Russian.

Some officials of the Chechen Ministry of Health Care subject to serious danger the lives of children who suffer from cancer because even in such situation they continue to stick to the notorious red tape.

- We absolutely do not need the results of tests that had been taken there. The children are losing at least a month before they are directed to us! We take all these tests here ourselves again when the patient arrives. What are they wasting the time of the patients reducing their chances of recovery?

- Today 30 beds, it is a third of all beds in the Department, are given to patients from the Chechen Republic. They usually get here with the third or the fourth stage, the ultimate stages of cancer development. In many cases surgical intervention is no longer possible. Then we provide palliative treatment: we remove pain, we try to stop the growth of a tumor by means of ionizing radioactive sources of irradiation, and we provide preventive maintenance of relapse. The rate of recovering patients from the Chechen Republic is lower than of residents of other regions because we deal with patients in a very serious condition. We already know the schedule of trains from Grozny. Someone on a stretcher always arrives at our doors an hour after the arrival of the train from Grozny.

- Do patients pay for their treatment themselves?

- Each republic has a quota, the number of patients who are treated free-of-charge during a year. There are 250 places allocated for the Chechen Republic and in reality we take about 800 patients. We try to reduce the expenses of our patients to the minimum.

Experts from the Institute unanimously say: almost all oncologic diseases can be cured but only at early stages. If the republic could have a diagnostic service, there could be fewer losses. A timely diagnosis is fifty percent of success in treatment. However, oncologic diseases of nerves can only be diagnosed with the help of computer tomographic scanner and they are absent in the hospitals of the Chechen Republic.

Only a few who require specialized treatment succeed in getting to the Rostov Oncology Institute. Hundreds of Russian citizens die of cancer at home for the lack of money and forces to get not only to Rostov but even to other neighboring republics where they accept cancer patients. It is still impossible to count cancer patients in the Chechen Republic. Until recently, the Chechen Ministry of Health Care did not collect any such statistical data. The figures in the reports cannot be considered authentic. One report may show 2,495 people registered while a similar document may show half of this number.

CONTROLLED

POGROMS



DOSH Documentary Film
October, 2008
Abdulla DUDUEV

DOSH Magazine presented a documentary film about bloody Chechen pogroms that happened in Kazakhstan in March, 2007, when a crowd of over 300 drunk Kazakhs cruelly murdered three Makhmakhanov brothers in the village of Kazatkom and selected trading kiosks and houses of the Chechens were attacked in the neighboring village of Malovodnoe.

The majority of the Chechens presently living in Kazakhstan are the citizens of Kazakhstan. They are those who remained here when the deported Vajnakhs moved back to their historical native land in 1957.

During the deportation of the Chechens and the Ingush in 1944, Elsa Makhmakhanov from a high-mountainous village of Cheberloy was only 13 years old. His future spouse Khava was almost six. Their life in the Kazakhstan exile was as heavy as that of all of their compatriots. To survive, they had to undertake different jobs, despite the early childhood, illnesses, cold, or other difficulties. Elsa Makhmakhanov was never afraid of difficulties. He got used to working, became attached with his soul to this land, and fell in love with it. He got in exile when he was still a boy, but he grew up here, and this territory became his native land. He decided to remain in Kazakhstan. It seemed, for ever ...

He devoted all his life to working on land and to growing animals. He worked at the collective farm for over forty years. His 14 children grew up here and became true, reliable assistants to their father. He managed to give higher education to all of them. He taught them how to distinguish good from evil, justice from injustice, and, the most important, he developed a strong bond to honest work in them.

Elsa was a well-known respected cattle breeder in Kazakhstan. Every year he received regional and republican awards for extraordinary performance and exceeding state plans. He was named the "Distinguished Cattle Breeder of Kazakhstan." Several times Makhmakhanov was nominated for the medal of Hero of Socialist Labor award but the fact that he belonged to the exiled people

was something like a stamp, so the award was always handed to a Kazakh. But he never got offended because of it. He liked his business. He did not care much about honors and awards.

He found happiness in his amicable family, his nine sons and five daughters. Elsa was a very kind person ready to share generously with everyone the pleasure of life that was overflowing his heart. ...Until that terrible day of March 18th, 2007. In a flash of a bloody blade it killed the harmony of his previous peaceful times and his trust in life that he managed to keep all these years.

In the middle of February 2007, strangers started to appear in the village of Kazatkom of Almaty region of Kazakhstan. The Kazakhs and the Russian have long lived here together with the Chechens, the Turks, and the Kurds. These strangers attempted to pit the Chechens and the Kazakhs against each other. One of the Kazakhs living in Kazatkom who had recently had a fight with his Chechen neighbor told us later that several strangers visited him and offered to call the Chechens down. But





the Kazakh was surprised that strangers had learned about that fight and were willing to do him a favor. He turned down their offer to help.

Two weeks later, former chief of local police Zapparov passed to one of the Makhmakhanov brothers an invitation for a serious conversation from the same strangers who were roving in the neighborhood. But the senior brother told the younger brothers not to meet with these strangers. One of those days, there was also another ridiculous and suspicious occurrence. An unknown man about 50 years old approached the house of the Makhmakhanovs on

March 11 and asked: "Did you order the gate? I came to check the size." The women did not know anything about it and made a phone call to the mother. She said that no one had ordered a new gate and asked the man to wait until she returned home. But the man disappeared without a trace. Everyone familiar with the Makhmakhanov family knew that their house never had a gate: their house was always open. The situation was becoming more disturbing. A lot of things indicated that someone was very much

willing to make mischief between the Chechens and the Kazakhs.

Having felt something bad, Shamil and Sado Makhmakhanov requested permission from the head of district administration to provide the hall of the recreation center for the meeting where they intended to discuss the developing situation with fellow villagers.

The official agreed with one condition: at the meeting they should have discussed first of all the latest message of President Nazarbaev to the Kazakh people. The Kazakh and Chechen elders volunteered to organize the meeting. The date was set for

March 17th. But on March 15th, district authorities unexpectedly refused permission for the meeting.

On March 17th, there was a fight in a billiard room of the neighboring village Malovodnoe. It was established in court that several clients who were drunk began to beat a local villager who was a Kazakh. His Chechen friend Magomed, a distant relative of the Makhmakhanovs, attempted to intercede for the friend. Then the thugs attacked Magomed. Club manager called Takhir Makhmakhanov on the phone. Takhir rushed to the billiard room and rescued Magomed. He took Magomed to hospital. But one of the instigators of the fight Selimbaev arrived to the hospital soon after them. According to witnesses, there was a quarrel between him and Takhir. Eventually they reconciled and parted after having settled the conflict.

That ill-fated Sunday morning of March 18th nothing indicated a trouble. The large and amicable Makhmakhanov family had a tradition to get together on weekends in the house of their parents in Kazatkom. The youngest brother, 32 years old Amir, a student of London Business School, arrived in the morning. Two other brothers arrived with their families: Nazhmuddin arrived from Kaliningrad and 50 years old Khadzhimurad arrived from Astana where he worked as deputy director of court administration department at the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan.

At the same time in Malovodnoe, located 8 kilometers away from Kazatkom, a huge crowd of over three hundred men gathered in front of the village administration building. As it was later established in court, the

people had been brought here from different areas of Kazakhstan, some came from places located 60 and even 100 kilometers away from here. Everything had been already prepared here: disposable tableware, snacks and, the main thing: vodka. The thugs were offered to drink quite a lot before the "fight", obviously, to make them more spiteful. Two hours later the crowd armed with pipes, bars, shotguns, cans with gasoline, and bottles with Molotov cocktail got into fifty expensive cars, obviously not belonging to this intoxicated crowd, and accompanied by several police cars drove in



the direction of Kazatkom. According to eyewitnesses, two officers of the local Department of Internal Affairs, Uzak Zhakupov and Bolat Kasymzhanov even made a phone call to their superiors before departing from Malovodnoe to Kazatkom. At this moment, one of the Makhmakhanov brothers was driving through Malovodnoe in the direction of Almaty when he heard an announcement from the loudspeakers of one of the police cars that was accompanying the column: "Let the column pass!" He waited until the column of cars passed and continued his way to Almaty. A few minutes later this column stopped right in front of his parents' house.

The four brothers Makhmakhanov who were in the house during that moment had only time to grab two hunting guns. Unarmed Khadzhimurad came out of the house for negotiations. Takhir, Amir and Nazhmutdin also stepped out of the house and stood in front of the crowd with two shotguns. Suddenly someone struck Khadzhimurad on his head with a bar. He fell down. The brothers tried to stop the crowd and began shooting first in the air, then in the ground and the feet of the attackers. But the drunk crowd flew into a rage and pressed as if they were crazy. Then the brothers opened fire for effect. The crowd started to throw stones, bottles, and bars at them. To rescue the members of household: the old parents, the women and young children, all the 16 people who remained in one of the houses, Khadzhimurad, Nazhmutdin and Amir ran in the direction of the field so that the crowd could follow them.

In the meantime, the second house and the cars parked on the site were set on fire by someone from the crowd. The smoke from this enormous fire was becoming denser. While the arsonists were having a good time, the others noticed the escaping brothers and rushed towards them across the field. Several kilometers away from the house, Amir, Khadzhimurad and Nazhmutdin were out of breath and they stopped.

Sado Makhmakhanov, having learned by phone about what happened, rushed to the house of his parents. In Malovodnoe, near a gas station, he stumbled over a person lying in dirt who was half-naked and stained with blood. It was his senior brother Hadzhimurad. It turned out that Nazhmutdin and Amir were transported to Malovodnoe while they were unconscious and the crowd continued to beat them.

In the meantime, part of the crowd started to shout "Kazakhstan for the Kazakhs!" and

rushed to crush Chechen trading kiosks in the center of the village and to plunder Chechen houses. They were taking out TVs, electronics, equipment, and cattle. Deputy Chief of Almaty Region Department of Internal Affairs Zhakupov personally observed the events. Like a traffic guide at a crossroads, he efficiently operated the "boisterous nature": the thugs obeyed his commands. The police that was supposed to protect peaceful residents was actually in charge of the medieval bloodbath.



Moreover, the police arrested two Makhmakhanov brothers, Zelimkhan and Sado, who arrived to rescue their relatives. The brothers were kept in custody for almost two days at the district police station.

According to Zelimkhan, Vice-minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan Shpekaev told them: "The people demand that the Chechen should be evicted. And it is likely that we will evict you." When Zelimkhan asked him: "So, go ahead and evict us, why kill us?" Vice-Minister scornfully said: "Don't be a clever ass!"

For five hours the police did not let the ambulance cars approach to the bleeding victims of the pogrom!

As a result the Makhmakhanov brothers died in hospital without regaining consciousness: the younger Amir died first, then Nazhmutdin, and four days later Khadzhimurad. The doctors who later were afraid to witness in court confessed that all

the three brothers could be saved had it been allowed by the chief of regional police who hastily arrived at the hospital where the half-alive brothers were delivered. A nurse asked him: "What shall we do, blood is coming out of the mouth of one of them (Khadzhimurad)?" and the police chief answered: "Stitch up his mouth!"

On the second day of the tragedy, the majority of Kazakhstan official mass-media presented a false interpretation of these events. It seemed as if it was a single pre-

fabricated version of the events, according to which the victims of the pogrom were declared guilty because they themselves had been killed and plundered. Deputy of Parliament of Kazakhstan General Serik Abdrakhmanov justified the murderers in this way: "The Makhmakhanov family lived not by the law but by a law onto themselves. They lived too rich! This has been causing 'heartburn' among our people for a long time."

An independent newspaper Epokha was the only newspaper in the republic of Kazakhstan that published an objective chronicle of the tragedy and this issue of the newspaper became the last one. Epokha was closed instantly. Because there should be no alternative version of the events.

Many were impatiently awaiting the reaction of Nursultan Nazarbaev, President of Kazakhstan. It only followed 40 days later. The head of Kazakhstan found applicable only to remind the Chechens of who had



given shelter to them during the deportation, and he called on them to be grateful for it. As if Comrade Stalin, the father of all Soviet peoples, had asked the deported whether they wished to stay here for a while or the inhabitants of places of exile whether they were willing to host the deported!

Court hearings resembled those during the trials of Russian military Budanov and Ulman that had taken place in Rostov-on-Don: with groups of support of the murderers and fascist yelling at the victims and all the Chechens.

In December 2007, the Almaty Regional court pronounced its sentence in the case of Amir's and Khadzhimurad's murder. The investigation of Nazhmudtin's murder with regard to offense committed by unknown persons remains unfinished until now. Two defendants were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and the third was sentenced to 12 years. Two more were put on probation for burning the cars and the house. And there was no criminal case opened with regard to the policemen, numbering, according to eyewitnesses, not less than 16 (and 16 were only those who were wearing uniform), who plundered the house of the Makhmakhanov family.

As of today, the organizers of the pogroms have not been found. Participation of the policemen in this crime, which is obvious to many, was not even considered. The appeals that the Makhmakhanov family sent to the State Office of Public Prosecutor, the National Security Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs,

and the Parliament of Kazakhstan were ignored entirely. As if they never existed.

At the same time, law enforcement agencies put pressure upon the Chechens from Malovodnoe demanding that they should not write in their statements that there had been any pogroms. As it was discovered later, this was necessary to transform the murder of the Makhmakhanov brothers into a criminal conflict and to open two different criminal cases.

It doesn't take Poirot or Sherlock Holmes to see not only interest but also direct participation of rather influential persons from various Republican authorities in the brutal punishment of the Chechens. No matter how disgusting a crowd of drunk thugs is, they are not the main instigators of what happened but only the pawns in someone's mean but quite sober hands. Evidence to this is the professional murder of one of

the instigators of the pogrom who was shot in the back of the head by one of the attackers right at the place of the pogrom. And it was Takhir Makhmakhanov who was accused of this murder. An international arrest warrant was issued against him. One high ranking general of Kazakhstan National Security Committee told the elder Makhmakhanov on the basis on anonymity that there was a secret order to shoot Takhir as soon as he would be found and it should be passed for resistance during the arrest. Our trip to Kazakhstan and shooting the documentary was not easy. Many eyewitnesses who had expressed willingness to speak on camera in earlier telephone conversations were evading the interview the last minute. As they told us later, after our telephone conversations they were visited by officers from the National Security Committee who threatened to organize problems similar to those of the Chechens. Today many Chechens and Russians wish to leave Kazakhstan. They do not see any future for themselves here. One can often see ads on the gates "The house is for sale." But how can one sell it when nobody is willing to buy? Any prospective buyer is approached by strange persons who warn: "Do not buy or we will burn the house down!"

Soon after these events, the authorities of Kazakhstan expressed the desire to take the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the year 2010 and the body's council approved this move. Can the country whose authorities warm up and provoke xenophobia instead of fighting against it set a good example while heading this respectable European institution even for one year?



DOSH MAGAZINE SEMINARS IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS



In 2008, under the joint project with the partner organization Pax Christi Vlaanderen (with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium), DOSH Magazine editorial board conducted in Northern Caucasus a series of training seminars for students of law departments and NGO representatives about methods of legal protection of citizens. Participants in the seminars discussed the opportunities for rendering legal aid to citizens in protection and upholding their rights in the modern complicated political conditions in the region. One of the main themes of the seminars became a lecture on the procedure of making an appeal in the European Court of Human Rights. Over the last years, for many citizens of Russia, mainly from the

Northern Caucasus, this court has become the ultimate judicial body and an opportunity to achieve justice, which they could not find in Russia. Practical teaching aids were distributed among students at the seminars. These included issue #2(20), 2008 of DOSH Magazine with a supplement insert* "The European Court of Human Rights. The Chechens and Ingushs go to Strasbourg." This special supplement insert describes in detail the work of the European Court of Human Rights, the procedure for submitting and registering complaints, examples of cases won by Russian citizens from the Northern Caucasus in the European Court, and the interview with the lawyer representing their interests in the European Court of Human Rights.

DVD disks** with a course of video lectures about the European legal culture and the legal practices in Russia were also distributed at the seminars. Henry Padva, member of the Scientific and Advisory Council of the Federal Chamber of Lawyers of Russia and member of Council of the Moscow Chamber of Lawyers, Alexander Martinkus, the lawyer of the Interrepublican Chamber of Lawyers and professor of the International University, and Sergey Kovalev, human rights activist, were among the lecturers on this disk.

**Supplement insert "The European Court of Human Rights. The Chechens and Ingushs go to Strasbourg" in DOSH magazine issue #2(20), 2008 was published with support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Moscow.*

*** DVD disks with a course of video lectures were distributed under the joint project with the partner organization Pax Christi Vlaanderen and with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium.*



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The City of Grozny. A Painting by Zora Berweger.