

THE FIRST INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE ABOUT EVENTS IN THE CAUCASUS

WORD

DOSI

DIGEST



ISSUE #15

IN A COUNTRY BACK FROM WAR

On the values of the Chechen youth — survey results

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THEMIS: *SUI IURIS*?

Justice has been served! Dmitry Pavlyuchenkov has been sentenced to *eleven* years of imprisonment for his involvement in the murder of *Novaya Gazeta* columnist Anna Politkovskaya. Pavlyuchenkov was under investigation from August 23, 2011, which means that he will have to spend *nine years and eight months* in the colony. Though, even this is doubtful, since he will be eligible for parole in six years, and his petition may be granted. After all, he is no Khodorkovsky or Lebedev! And yet, an inner voice tells me that Pavlyuchenkov will be freed even earlier. His lawyer has already petitioned (and will go on doing so) for his gravely-ill defendant to be granted a suspended sentence. And why not? Pavlyuchenkov's illness, whatever it may be, is no doubt more serious than that of Vasily Aleksanyan. Or the one that afflicts that young woman, Taisiya Osipova. By the way, she, a diabetic and mother to a small child, was sentenced to eight years for selling drugs. But, "was there a boy?"

The fact that Pavlyuchenkov must compensate the family of Anna Politkovskaya to the tune of three million rubles, is an insignificant detail not worth mentioning, like anything involving money. He received 150 thousand dollars from the client who hired him, so three million rubles should be easy to muster.

We would also like to note --- and this is not unimportant --- that Pavlyuchenkov was placed under guard upon the verdict's announcement. Prior to that, he was under house arrest. It follows that the court did not consider the former officer of the Moscow City Police a threat to society. Beside this, the court was not worried that

Pavlyuchenkov might influence those involved in the case.

So why did Pavlyuchenkov receive such a light sentence? It is written that he cooperated with investigators, giving up his accomplices (or persons imaginary), and that he has received plaudits and medals, among them one for "distinguished service." (He distinguished himself especially in surveilling Anna Politkovskaya and setting his accomplices on her trail.) This qualifies as a mitigating circumstance? But the main thing, of course, is that he "cooperated." Though, he did not name the person who hired him, which is the pith of the problem, since the assassin and his accomplices are no more than six.

And so to recapitulate: some, as we know, are tried over nothing: simply, some distinguished police felt like being courageous, and that is sufficient to turn a healthy person into a lifelong invalid. I suppose that given such examination methods it would not have been difficult to ascertain the client's name. What does "exceeding one's authorized powers" matter? No one "exceeded" anything, nor figured anything out. Did they not want to very much? Or is the client's name already known?

But I digress. Beside everything else, what bothers me in this story is that Anna Politkovskaya's life, as it turns out, is worth unimaginably less than the life of the football fan Egor Sviridov. Recall that for murdering Sviridov, likely without premeditation, Aslan Cherkosov was sentenced to twenty years! Is it not time to remove the blindfold from Themis' eyes? If we did, perhaps we would discover whether she is *sui iuris*.

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"Our repeated requests to the head of the Republic of Ingushetia and to the Republic of Ingushetia Security Council produced no results; everywhere we heard a single answer: we believe the security agencies." How many such testimonials have already been printed by this magazine? And how many more — we are terrified to ask — will we have to print? It seem as if time has stopped and the only audible sound is of the blood fleeing the hearts of mothers and fathers — of the exhausted tears shed by sisters and brothers. Not everyone, unfortunately, can hear it.



ABDULLA DUDUEV MEANWHILE, PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DISAPPEAR...

Chronicle of disappearances
in Ingushetia in 2012

On February 10, 2012, around eleven o'clock in the evening, in Karabulak, on ul. Promyslova, near a railroad overpass, four unidentified men armed with automatic rifles abducted 50-year-old **Amerkhan Gadaborshev**.

On February 17, 2012, between six and seven o'clock in the evening, at the Mineralnye Vody train station in the Stavropol Region, presumable FSB agents abducted **Rustam Aushev**, born 1988, an inhabitant of Nazran, Republic of Ingushetia.

On March 22, 2012, around nine o'clock in the evening, in Ordzhonikidzevskaya Stanitsa of the Sunzhensky District of Ingushetia, unidentified armed men abducted local inhabitant **Abubakar Tsechoyev**, born 1978.

According to Ibrahim Tsechoyev, Abubakar's brother, the abduction took place in the main pump station of the *Vodokanal* PEWSS (Public Enterprise for Water Supply and Sanitation) located on ul. Kalinina of Ordzhonikidzevskaya Stanitsa in the Sunzhensky District of the Republic of Ingushetia where Abubakar was working as an operator. According to witnesses, three station employees — an electrician, a machinist and a guard — were abducted by the armed men who burst into the station in camouflaged uniforms and masks. Three of them attacked Abubakar and began beating

him with their rifle butts. They tied up the other employees and kept them in their sights. One employee who tried to resist was also beaten. Having placed the half-conscious Abubakar in handcuffs, they carried him to the car. The abductors spent another hour at the pump station, after which they drove off in an unknown direction. At the moment, Mr. Tsechoyev's location is undetermined. The persons involved in his abduction also remain unidentified.

On June 11, 2012, in the Sunzhensky District of Ingushetia, three villagers of Arshty disappeared under murky circumstances: **Bay-Ali Makhauri**, born 1982, **Bekkhan Zhukalayev**, born 1985, and **Islam Bazgiyev**, born 1990.

According to relatives, Mr. Makhauri took his car, a green *VAZ 21099*, to the village of Berd-Yurt to help his relatives build a house. Bekkhan Zhukalayev and Islam Bazgiyev went with him. Relatives learned from eyewitness accounts that in the evening when they were returning home, between the urban centers Berd-Yurt and Arshty, the car occupied by the young men was stopped by unidentified men in camouflage who arrived in three *Lada-Prioras* and one white *Gazelle*. The relatives do not know what happened after that.

According to data from the Central Investigation Department of the Investigative Committee of Russia for the Republic of Ingushetia, on June 12,

2012, around seven o'clock in the morning, a burned car, presumed to be a *VAZ 21099*, was discovered in the environs of Berd-Yurt. Fragments of a burned body were also found at this location. The deceased was identified by his relatives as Bekkhan Zhukalayev of Arshty.

The Republic of Ingushetia MVD's website reports that the burned car belonged to Bay-Ali Makhauri and that the cause of the fire was an explosion equivalent to 800 grams of TNT.

At the current time the whereabouts of B-A. Makhauri and I. Bazgiyev are undetermined.

On August 23, 2012, around nine and a half o'clock in the morning, in the Ordzhonikidzevskaya Stanitsa of the Sunzhensky District of Ingushetia, **Ruslanbek Agiyev**, born 1988, was abducted.

According to the statement of his wife, Khava Gatiyeva, around nine and a half o'clock in the morning of August 23, 2012, when R. Agiyev was returning from his shift, unknown persons in camouflage and masks drove up in a silver *Lada-Priora*, stopped his car, pulled him out and began beating him with their rifle butts. Thereafter, the abductors placed the unconscious Ruslanbek into their car and drove away in an unknown direction. She was told all of this by witnesses to the abduction.

Mr. Agiyev was a private security guard for the Republic of Ingushetia MVD.

Where he is remains undetermined. The persons involved in the abduction have likewise not been found.

On December 6, in the Mayskoye urban center, a suburb of RNO-Alania, a group of armed persons abducted 29-year-old Akhmed Buzurtanov, a trainer at the *Kaloy fitness club*. According to information provided by Mr. Buzurtanov's relatives, his car was stopped near his home by a group of unknown persons in black military uniforms. The group had driven up in three passenger cars. The assailants pulled Akhmed out of the car and, overpowering him, placed him into one of their cars. After this, they vanished, as in all of the aforementioned cases, in an unknown direction. The athlete's car was later found outside of Mayskoye with shattered windows.

Akhmed is the third man in his family to have disappeared without a trace. His father and older brother also disappeared in 1992, during the Ingush-Ossetian Conflict.

However, this time the victim was well known, and therefore the deed was "done quickly": the North Ossetian investigating authorities have opened an investigation into Mr. Buzurtanov's abduction (Clause 1 Section 105 (Murder) Criminal Code of the Russian Federation).

Detective A. Taymazov's preliminary conclusion beggars belief: he supposes that Akhmed Buzurtanov fell victim to criminals.

And so, people keep disappearing approximately once every two months. What the abductors' priorities are in terms of their "selection" of victims, remains unclear. At first glance, all of the disappeared are completely random people. Aside perhaps from Akhmed Buzurtanov whose professional activities might have inconvenienced someone. After all, is there not

a plenty of the envious on this sinful planet?

What lies behind the word "disappear"? And who is behind the disappearances? Aliens? In such cases it really is impossible to find either the abductors or their victim. It looks like this is precisely the conclusion that the North Caucasus republics' investigative authorities are, fatalistically, leaning towards: they don't seem to trouble themselves too much, since the abductors can't be touched, while the victims are, undoubtedly, better off in some far-away galaxy. Hence, these authorities' disinterest in searching for the causal relationships that lie at the foundations of any crime. Though to tell the truth, without uncovering these relationships, you will not find the criminals or the victims — but then again, the task is too laborious. How much effort and time would be spent on dealing with this problem in earnest! Plus there's nothing to be gained in doing so, since the republics' executive organs look down upon these events with a condescension worthy of celestials.

There's only one problem: you just cannot convince the relatives of vanished people that their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers are really better off *there, in another galaxy*.

The data provided herein, concerning the traceless disappearances in late 2012 of Ingush citizens, cannot be considered complete because the cases



described are the only ones that this publication is aware of.

P.S. On December 17, the head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov met with the colleagues of Akhmed Buzurtanov. As our correspondent was told by one of this meeting's participants, the head of the Republic reminded those present that he had "offered them hints earlier, not to tangle themselves with people one shouldn't tangle with" (meaning members of the armed resistance — Author's Note).

"Did Akhmed hear this?" Mr. Yevkurov asked the club manager, Murad Izmaylov. He went on to explain that he had phone transcripts of Mr. Buzurtanov's conversations which (as far as can be gleaned from the Republic head's not very clear but suggestive words) testify to the abducted man's connections with the insurgents.

But there was another even more astounding fact: the Secretary of the Security Council of Ingushetia, Akhmed Kotiyev, who accompanied Mr. Yevkurov, informed the meeting that a criminal investigation has been opened into Mr. Buzurtanov's abduction under Section 105 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation — "Murder."

The fitness trainer's coworkers and friends, who had theretofore assumed that the abducted man's fate was unknown, were extremely unsettled upon hearing this. And so, Mr. Buzurtanov is dead and the Republic's leadership somehow knows this? In the end, no one dared to ask whether this means that the authorities are implicitly admitting their involvement in the abduction of Akhmed Buzurtanov and, consequently, in extra-legal executions — as well as, whether one may expect the imminent (or not so imminent) discovery of the killed "insurgent" Buzurtanov.

29-year-old fitness trainer Akhmed Buzurtanov was abducted on December 6, 2012, in the Mayskoye settlement in the suburbs of North Ossetia by an armed group in military uniforms.

"We were left one-on-one with our grief..."

— So say the relatives of Rustam and Akhmedkhan Aushev, Khasan Esmurziyev, and Zurab Didigov, abducted and tortured by security-service agents.

"Our repeated requests to the head of the Republic of Ingushetia and to the Republic of Ingushetia Security Council produced no results; everywhere we heard a single answer: we believe the security agencies."

How many such testimonials have already been printed by this magazine? And how many more — we are terrified to ask — will we have to print? It seem as if time has stopped and the only audible sound is of the blood fleeing the hearts of mothers and fathers — of the exhausted tears shed by sisters and brothers. Not everyone, unfortunately, can hear it.

Our correspondent in Ingushetia, **Magomet KARTOEV**, recorded these soul-rending stories.

The First Story

There is sorrow, suffering, and despair in the eyes of Pyatimat (Fatima) Ausheva.

In February a great grief came to her door: her son Rustam Aushev vanished in Mineralnye Vody. On February 17, he had departed by train from Nazran to Mineralnye Vody where he was to change trains for Brest. Rustam was on his way to Belgium to visit his sister. According to Rustam's wife, Asi, at five o'clock in the evening, Rustam was already in Mineralnye Vody and was communicating with her by text message. After six, Rustam stopped answering messages or calls, and after seven his phone was off.

Relatives spent a day waiting to hear from him and then went to Mineralnye Vody to look for him. They turned to the rail station's guards for help and were shown CCTV footage. One camera recorded how four unknown people in civilian clothes detain Rustam, bending his arms. Another showed Rustam being placed in a white *Gazelle* van. According to the station guards, even prior to Mr. Aushev's detainment, they had asked the driver of the white *Gazelle* to move the van because it was parked in a restricted area. The van was not allowed on the station premises, so the unknown men moved it some distance away.

The guards did not give the Aushevs this footage, promising that they would hand it over at law enforcement's request. But like Rustam, it too vanished mysteriously and tracelessly.

Rustam, the youngest of Pyatimat's sons, was two years old when his mother's husband left, leaving her alone with five small children. Pyatimat ended up burying one of her small sons. How she raised the chil-

dren only she and Allah know. There was no one to help the young woman. To raise her children, she struggled like a fish against the ice. Despite the hardships, she managed to provide them with a post-secondary education; she married off her sons and found a husband for her daughter. Few men can manage as much.

Her sons Akhmedkhan and Rustam made her happy with their work ethic and their lack of bad habits. Both finished School No. 1 in Nazran. Rustam received his diploma with distinction. Pyatimat dreamed of a peaceful old age.

On June 29, misfortune once more visited the house of the poor woman: at six o'clock in the morning, security-service agents surrounded it in ten cars, searched it, and took with them her son, Akhmedkhan.

"On the Internet it says that Akhmedkhan is a leader of the Narzani insurgents group," says Pyatimat, "and that he had a personal driver named Bashir Mislaurov. But if my son has his own personal driver, why would I need to work as a housemaid?"

"Akhmedkhan has been disabled since childhood," says his wife, Inessa. "Currently, he is in Pretrial Detention Facility No. 1 in Vladikavkaz. They took him to the *Oktyaborskoe* Temporary Detention Facility and kept them there ten days; they tortured him there. At midnight, they would wrap his head in paper and scotch tape, drive him out to a field in a *Gazelle* and beat him. So that there would be no traces from the beatings, they would tie rags to him and hit him there. Later, in the temporary detention facility, they would finish him off with electricity. They demanded he sign a confession and refuse lawyers. On the tenth day, to let the traces of the beatings dissipate, they took him



Rustam Aushev vanished at the train station g6 Mineralnye Vody on February 17, 2012.

to a temporary detention facility of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania MVD. I have a medical examination certificate dated February 7, 2012. All of the complaints about the torture of Akhmedkhan submitted by the lawyer Luiza Isayeva to the Prosecutor of North Ossetia, remain unanswered. All of the investigatory events were conducted without the lawyer's presence. Under torture, Akhmedkhan was coerced to refuse legal representation because 'we don't need your lawyers; we have our own.' The detectives were telling them that their relatives had turned their backs on them, but of course they didn't believe them, and on November 13, I signed a new agreement with the lawyers."

The Second Story

There was no place that the young mother of three (the youngest is eight months), Rumina Kodzoyeva did not seek succor from her misfortune. She sent petitions to eighteen offices, starting from the President of the Russian Federation, the head of the Republic of Ingushetia, and ending with the mufti of the Republic of Ingushetia.

She passed on her petition to us too:

"A very complicated and tangled situation has forced us to turn to you. Everything began during the most holy festival, Eid al-Adba, when out of nowhere, people in camouflaged uniforms and masks burst into the courtyard of my father-in-law, Sali Esmurziyev. This took place between three and four o'clock in the afternoon on October 26, 2012.

"That day, my husband Khasan Esmurziyev, our three small children, and I had gone to Khasan's parents' house to congratulate the elders and celebrate the festival.

We were all shocked and daunted by such an impudent and unforgivable incursion by the armed group, which numbered between twenty and thirty people.

"At the time, we were about to do the after-supper salat. But the ritual was interrupted by the actions of the men who burst into the courtyard of my father-in-law armed to the teeth.

"Hardly had the indiscriminate automatic fire started than my husband Khasan began running for the neighboring street — terrified of a repeat of what had happened to him three months prior when the same kind of armed men had put him in a car and, locking him in a cell, tortured him for ten days. They tried to 'beat' the necessary information out of him, but not getting anything, finally let him go ten days later. This was how long they needed for the traces of torture (hematomas on his body) to vanish. Having released Khasan, they warned him to keep his 'mouth shut' and not file any complaints. As mentioned above, this took place three months ago.

"As soon as he made for the neighboring street, the armed men took off after him



As a result of torture, Khasan Esmurziyev's wrist is fractured, the webbing between his fingers torn, and he cannot hear well.

and, firing, wounded him in his leg and arm.

"For these acts, just as in '37, the perpetrators receive awards and enormous monetary rewards.

"As a mother and a woman, I am completely convinced that such crimes will lead to the inevitable demise of our great Motherland, which cannot be allowed under any circumstances!

"With their cruel and unjustified actions, these security agents foment distrust and hate toward the authorities and law enforcement agencies among the public. The soldiers conduct these operations pursuing their private gain, since they receive enormous amounts of money for doing this: they are paid from fifty to seventy thousand rubles for each hour of the 'operation.' Earning such money, they strive to conduct similar operations often and for as long as possible. At the heart of this business are the corpses and blood of many innocent people. Now, exactly this has happened to my husband. I represent and warrant to you, as President of the Russian Federation, that my husband was never involved with the insurgents and that there was never any explosives or firearms in our house.

"In my turn, I am loath to insult honest soldiers who are sacredly fulfilling their debt to their motherland. However, I must say that there are among them ignoble monsters who are ready to sacrifice their honor for the sake of profit and fame. But it is immoral to strive for this, scorning the tears and sorrow of such women and mothers as myself!

"No less blasphemous is that 'they' (the 'guardians of the law'), a day after the shooting of my husband (the father of three children), posted to the Internet that he was allegedly trying to commit a suicide attack, intending to destroy his coreligionists, fellow Muslims, on the holy for all festival of Eid al-Adba.

"If Khasan, as these 'Internet sources' claimed, wanted to commit a terrorist act through suicide bombing, he could have done it quite effectively in our city's Central Mosque during the mass morning salat when it was full of people, or on the same day during the Sabbatical supper salat.

"It turns out that he (if we are to believe his executioners) decided to destroy his children, parents, brothers, sisters and all their guests, who had gathered for the festival at his father's house.

"I urgently ask you, honorable Mr. President, as the guarantor of our nation's Constitution, as well as of the rights and freedoms of our fellow citizens, to get to the bottom of this case and punish those who under contrived pretexts and assumptions, for the sake of private gain and stars on their epaulets, commit crimes, crippling people, taking their life, and leaving their children orphans!"

"Honorable Mr. Yevkurov! I assure you that I would not turn to you if I even slightly suspected my husband of the crime he is incriminated in. Respectfully yours, Rumina Kodzoyeva, as well as the numerous witnesses to this crime:

1. Lida Esmurziyeva
 2. Sali Esmurziyev
 3. Daud Esmurziyev
 4. Maret Esmurziyeva
 5. Radimkhan Gadiyeva
 6. Zalina Esmurziyeva
 7. Fatima Kulbuzbeva
 8. Asya Gagiyeva
 9. Khusein Esmurziyev
- November 1, 2012."

In answer to her petition, Rumina Kodzoyeva received the following response from the Nazran Prosecutor's Office:

"The Prosecutor's Office of Nazran has examined your petition concerning the illegal actions of law enforcement agents toward K. Esmurziyev.

"It is established that on October 26, 2012, in the course of investigative work being conducted by agents from the Center for Extremist Countermeasures of the Republic of Ingushetia MVD in conjunction with agents from the RF Federal Security Service Directorate for the Republic of Ingushetia, aimed at the detainment of Khasan Esmurziyev, born 1981, residing at: 17 ul. Didigova, Interregional 1 Iasyr-Kortskiy, Nazran, Republic of Ingushetia, suspected of involvement in 15 illegally armed groups, said suspect attempted to hide, threatening to explode himself and law enforcement agents by means of an explosive device. During his pursuit, K. Esmurziyev was cornered on the premises of house No. 3 located at the following address: 11a per. Transportniy, Interregional Nasyr-Kortskniy, Nazran. The suspect responded negatively to the police agents' repeated demands for his surrender, displaying an object in his hand that resembled a grenade and threatening to explode himself and the police agents. Following which, one of the law enforcement agents, during an attempt on the part of K. Esmurziyev to approach him, employed his authorized

firearm, as a result of which, the suspect suffered gunshot wounds to his extremities. K. Esmurziyev was neutralized and detained by RF FSBD of the Republic of Ingushetia agents, after which he was offered medical assistance. A personal search of K. Esmurziyev uncovered and confiscated a 'kbatabka' homemade explosive device and a 'Shabeeed belt' homemade explosive device with primed projectiles.

"Based on these circumstances, on October 27, 2012, the head of the Examination Department of the MVD of Russia for the city of Nazran has opened criminal case No. 12160205 against K. Esmurziyev under Clause 1, Section 222 of the RF Criminal Code.

"Upon examination of the criminal case's materials, no violations of the suspect's, K. Esmurziyev's, rights have been ascertained.

"For your information, I report that your petition concerning the illegal detention of K. Esmurziyev in the temporary detention facility of the MVD of Russia for the Sunzbenksky District, has been sent to the Prosecutor's Office for the Sunzbenksky District in pursuance to the territorial principle.

"In the event that you disagree with the adopted decision, you are entitled to address a superior prosecutor's office or to the Magass District Court in accordance with established procedure.

"Deputy Prosecutor for the City of Nazran, MADobriyev."

Currently Khasan Esmurziyev is in the special ward at the Nazran Central Republican Hospital.

"The bones of his wrist have been fractured by a blunt instrument," says Rumina. "The webbing between his fingers is torn and he cannot hear well. He had one operation, another remains.

Many in the Republic knew my husband. He used prayer to heal people's ailments. He helped the poor and needy, organizing charitable events — even though we ourselves live modestly. He earned money by laying paving slabs. He even received a letter of appreciation from the Muslim Spiritual Authority for his charitable work."

The Third Story

Zurab Didigov, like Akhmedkhan Aushev, was taken from his home early in the morning of June 29.

"Because my husband went off to the session, on the night of June 28, my son slept at my house," relates Alikhan Didigov. "Not having found my son at his home, the security-service agents showed up at our house at six o'clock in the morning. They began to check our passports. Seeing Zurab's passport they began to 'get out of hand.' I placed a carbine and a non-lethal pistol on the table, but they didn't even concern themselves with what these weapons were or where they had come from. The planted four hundred grams of hexogen on us and took Zurab. For thirteen days we knew nothing about our son. I am ready to swear on the Qur'an that my son Zurab is not guilty of anything. Someone slandered him. On the day of the explosion of the Ural truck, of which he is accused, Zurab was not at home. He had gone to Rostov to get a car. We have call records from his cell phone and a notarized letter of attorney from the car's seller.

"Under pressure, our son refused a lawyer and incriminated himself. 'I have a sick heart; I won't survive torture. If you want it, I'll claim responsibility for the September 11 terror act in America,' my son told the detectives.

"Having ascertained that our son is innocent, we have renewed our agreement with a lawyer."

RUSLAN ZHADAYEV WAR HERO OR UNREPENTANT CRIMINAL?



A trial is getting underway in Moscow over the June 2011 murder of former-Colonel Yuri Budanov, who spent eight years in prison for the rape and murder of a Chechen schoolgirl. The suspect in Budanov's murder is the Chechen Republic citizen Yusup Temerkhanov, who detectives claim, shot the ex-colonel as revenge for his father, burned alive by Federal forces in 2000.

According to the investigation, at around noon on June 10, 2011, Yusup Temerkhanov fired several bullets from a pistol into Yuri Budanov, who had emerged from a notarial office on the capital's Komsomolsk Prospekt. Two of the bullets struck Budanov in the head.

Following this, Mr. Temerkhanov fled the scene of the murder in a foreign car. The automobile was later discovered half-burned a few blocks from the scene of the crime, but the detectives supposedly found irrefutable evidence attesting to Yusup Temerkhanov's involvement in this crime. This case will be tried by a jury.

The defendant's lawyer, Murad Musayev, wrote about how this case's investigation is being conducted. This is not simply a legal report — this is also a landmark document.

1. Our claim about the illegal detention of Yusup-Khadzhi Temerkhanov and his torture by the Main Investigative Directorate of Russia for Moscow was met with a ruling denying an initiation of a criminal investigation. (Considering that the internal investigation was entrusted to the same agency that was investigating Yusup's

criminal case, there is nothing strange about this.) Naturally we appealed this ruling all the way up to a cassation, but it was in vain.

Meanwhile, this abduction, just as the torture, is a proven matter. We interviewed the concierge in Yusup's house, the groundskeepers, the neighbors — all of them claimed that on August 19, 2011, he walked out of his house to return only on August 26 clapped in handcuffs and barely walking. We found the taxi driver who picked up Yusup from his house on August 19, 2011. The taxi driver explained that as he was approaching ul. Mosfilmovskaya, he was stopped by a patrol car. When he approached the Road Patrol Service inspector someone grabbed him from behind, bent him over the hood and yelled, "Organized Crime Unit, remain lying like this for five minutes, then go home and keep quiet!" He heard screams and noise, after which the patrol car and several others departed with his passenger.

Yusup was tortured professionally: they beat his heels and kidneys. They strangled him in various ways and electrocuted him. None of these tortures leave visible traces. However, after a while the

torturers slipped up and applied the so-called "handcuffs stretch" to him, combining it with other "rides" (asphyxiation, electrocution etc.). This torture left deep wounds on Yusup's hands, which took several months to heal and left scars. Although the detective delayed the medical examination and the medicolegal investigation for a long time, nonetheless in the end the expert's conclusion included the presence of the aforementioned wounds.

All of these circumstances were ignored by the Russian investigatory and judicial agencies. Therefore, a week ago we turned to the European Human Rights Court with a complaint about torture and inhumane treatment, as well as the lack of an effective investigation into these facts. The complaint is supported by the advocacy investigation and we believe that it will be upheld. It is only a matter of time.

2. The internal investigation to our claim that Yusup had been attacked in the detainee holding rooms of Moscow City Court lasted 30 days — despite the fact that in the very beginning of this affair, the court representative claimed that of course the detainee holding rooms were outfitted with surveillance



cameras and there would be no problem with assessing our claim. We turned to the court with the pertinent request. The detective charged with the assessment requested the footage as well. We didn't have to wait long for a response: "The room in which Y. Temerkhanov was searched was not outfitted with a camera."

We became curious as to what room this was and why exactly it had no cameras. It turned out that the room in question was the deposition room!

After that, out of nowhere, three milk-sops in blue police uniforms came to the detective and announced that it was they who had coerced Yusup and, what's more, had done so legally. Moreover, the milkshops claimed that no one else was present at Yusup's search.

My client insisted on his version of events: there were no less than seven persons in the room, and he was beaten not by milkshops in blue uniforms, but by two, 120 kg meatheads dressed in black SWAT uniforms and boots. Thus, we had a contradiction.

We demanded to see the footage from the surveillance cameras installed in the hallway to the detainee room: if there were seven people in the room, including SWAT agents, then all of them must have come through the door in the hallway instead of the ventilation shafts.

The detective watched the hallway surveillance footage. Yusup's testimony was

completely confirmed: both in terms of the quantity and the "quality" of the persons involved. The detainee escort guards were lying. Yusup was telling the truth. And you know what? The detective refused to initiate a criminal investigation.

Currently, the refusal decision has been revoked by the prosecutor, and an additional internal investigation has been scheduled.

3. The case of Budanov's murder itself, as you no doubt know, went to court. Last Friday we were selecting jurors. It turned out that by way of "random computer selection" the Moscow City Court assigned us fifty jury candidates. Number 1 on the candidates' list (of course, randomly) turned out to be a former Russian Navy commander (I won't mention his last name — his rank, I believe, was that of a lieutenant general). To this individual's credit, it should be pointed out that he announced his self-disqualification, saying that he had served in Chechnya, knew Budanov, and therefore could be biased.

Today we had our first apposite court session. The judge conducts himself like... a judge of Moscow City Court: baseless attacks against defendants, an evident prejudice to every word and look.

No less than five or six Moscow Criminal Investigation Department agents come to every court session. One of them had to be removed from the courtroom today because we are planning to examine our friends the police as witnesses in the future. The rest of them waste time in the courtroom's hallway, performing "operational escort" for the case at trial — it is in my view, a total mockery of criminal-procedural law. Meanwhile, before and after the session, these people obviously act as the main tools for the prosecuting side — in witness preparation, in the "processing" of jurors etc.

This is all taking place against a background of popular wrath about the "impunity" of Rasul Mirzayev, against a background of hate toward everything Caucasian and, especially, Chechen, which any one of us senses in Moscow with every fiber of our bodies. Even inside the court building you feel like you're behind enemy lines. Only your colleagues come up to you to sympathize: such a case, they say, in such a time...

What can I say in response? "The camel has two humps because life is a trial."

The murder of ex-Colonel Budanov was so highly-publicized because it concerned a person who became "famous" through the abduction, rape, and strangulation of 18-year-old Chechen citizen Elza Kungayeva in March 2000. For this crime he was convicted and sentenced to ten years of incarceration, of which he served only eight. He was released on parole in 2009. While Budanov's trial was underway, while he was serving his sentence in the penal colony, as well as now, a year after his death, quite a few in Russia considered and consider him a "victim," a "true combat officer," and a "hero," who was "made to suffer over nothing." However, it's enough to simply familiarize oneself with a few official documents and testimonies of people who knew Budanov for this shining paragon of a "courageous officer" and "the doom of Chechen insurgents" to begin to fade and give way to a completely different portrait — that of a sadistic war criminal.

Here, for example, is the transcript of an interview with Valery Gerasimov, a sometime direct superior to Budanov. Not long ago, he became Commander of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

"Interview transcript of witness — injured party. Vladikavkaz. On

November 8, 2000, in the Office of the Military Prosecutor, Deputy Military Prosecutor for the Vladikavkaz Garrison, Lieutenant Colonel of Justice, T.Arummyunyan, conducted an interview under Sections 158 and 160 of the RSFSR Criminal Procedure Code with the following witness: Valery Gerasimov.

"By request of Witness Gerasimov, he was given the opportunity to compose his testimony in his own hand." Below follow six handwritten pages written personally by General Gerasimov (who was at the time commanding the Federal Forces Grouping Zapad, in the absence of the furloughed General Vladimir Shamanov). With military precision, Gerasimov relates the following:

"At 900 hours, on March 27, 2000, at a problem resolution meeting, the commandant for the Urus-Martanovsky District, Major General Y.Naumov reported to me that a young woman had vanished in the village of Tanga and that the suspected parties were soldiers.

"I called the commanders of the three regiments stationed near Tanga — Col. Yudin of the 245th Motorized Rifle Regiment, Col. Budanov of the 160th Armored Regiment, and Col. Petrov of the 752nd Motorized Rifle Regiment — and ordered them to, within 30 minutes, conduct a search and return the young woman. Gen. Verbitsky and I rode out for the 245th MRR, but along the way changed course for the 160th AR (I was planning on visiting all three regiments, since I didn't know for sure which soldiers abducted the girl).

"At the 160th AR subdivision, I was met by the regiment's commander, Col. Budanov. He reported that everything in the regiment was normal. I asked whether he had found anything out about the young woman. He replied that as of yet nothing was known. Ordering him to continue the search, Gen. Verbitsky and I traveled to Tanga,

since I had received news that some people (100–150) had gathered in the village center, demanding the return of the young woman and the release of the guilty parties.

"In the village, where the populace had gathered, we were met by the woman's father. I spoke with him separately, assuring him that we would find the criminals and return the woman. I asked him to address the gathering and ask them to disperse to their houses. He did as I requested.

"From the explanations given by the woman's father and uncle, it emerged that during the night, a colonel with some soldiers had come to the village in an APC, burst into the house, wrapped the woman in a quilt, and driven her off. They know this colonel; he was the commander of the armored regiment.

"Initially, Verbitsky and I did not believe this. Upon returning to the regiment from the village, I could not find Budanov. According to the report of the executive officer, he had gone off to Kbankala, supposedly to meet a commission from the Siberian Military Command. There was no commission. I ordered a helicopter to Kbankala to arrest Budanov and sent a car with an officer after him. Later it turned out that the regiment's executive officer had lied to me about the license number of Budanov's car. After three hours, Budanov himself showed up. During my meeting with him, he drew his pistol and shot himself in the leg.

"Concerning the characters of Budanov and Fedorov. As regiment commander, Budanov managed his responsibilities during combat operations in Chechnya. The 160th Armored Regiment never acted at full strength. Its units would reinforce other regiments. A core remained in the regiment that consisted of several servicing and logistics units. Budanov can be described as a strong-

willed commander, though there were cases of harshness to his subordinates, needless shouting. I do not know Fedorov well, but based on what I saw on March 27–28, I can say that he is not a completely sane person.

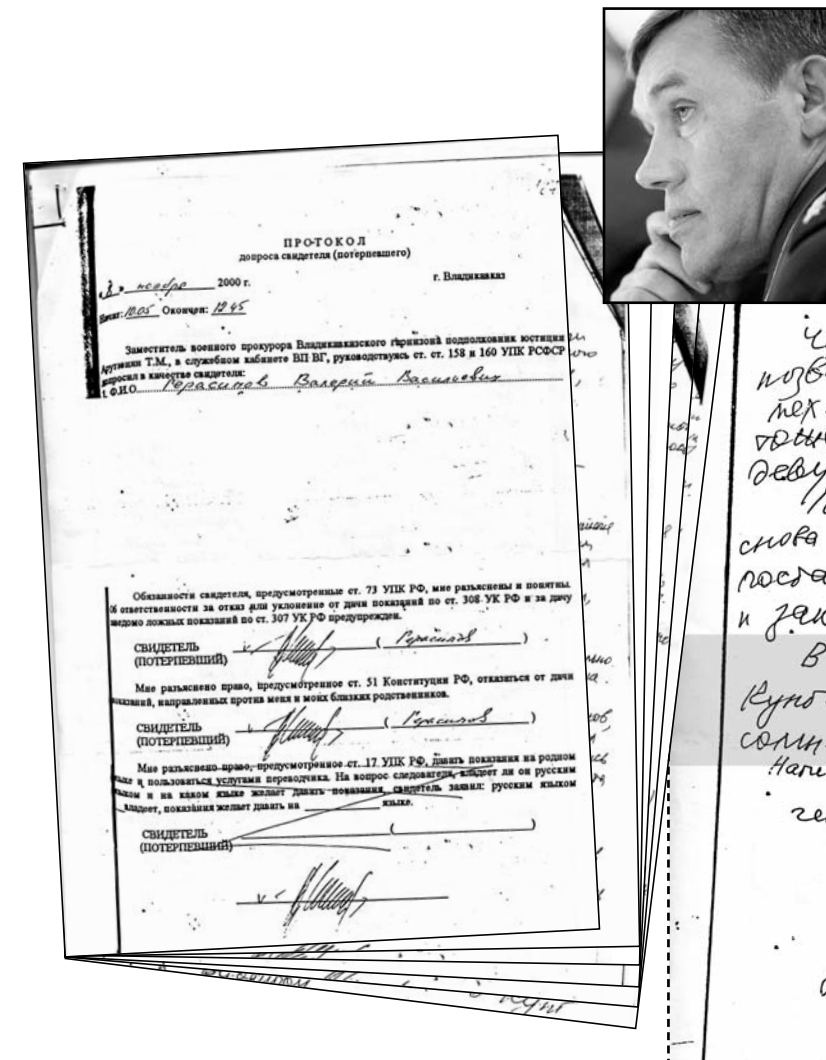
"The 160th had been ordered to the locality of the Tanga village to guard and defend themselves there. The reconnaissance unit was ordered to conduct reconnaissance — that is, search measures. The order was issued by the commander of the western deployment (I personally performed these duties from March 5 to April 20).

"No orders were given for any actions within the Tanga urban center. Moreover, I forbade any soldiers from even showing up in urban centers (with the exception of the police, OMON, and FSB).

"While alternatives were being considered, instructions for heightened security went out in oral and written (telegram) forms to all the commands, including the 160th. Orders for the detection and apprehension of snipers, insurgents and their accomplices specifically in the Tanga urban center, were not issued.

"Budanov's and Fedorov's verification of the reconnaissance company's combat readiness were unsatisfactory, first of all, because both men were inebriated.

"The combined force received no categorical prohibition against firing upon the urban centers. In the event that, during combat operations, a house in an urban center was identified as one from which our units were being fired upon — then in that event, of course, that house would be subjected to fire. But these cases numbered in the single digits. Normally, urban centers were never fired upon. There were no complaints concerning a firing upon a house in Tanga.



Interview transcript of Valery Gerasimov (in photo), the sometime direct superior of Budanov, currently the Commander of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces.

"I personally examined Budanov's box van. On March 27, it was in complete order — laundered clothes, everything washed and cleaned. There was nothing out of place in there, only Budanov's personal items and clothes. I saw neither a photo album nor a Polaroid photo. I did not accuse Budanov of the rape of citizen Kungayeva after lunch on March 27.

"Coming back to the beginning of my clarification, when Budanov appeared (March 27) and shot himself in the leg, I, being beside him, ordered the army officers (there were 6–7 officers with me) to disarm and arrest Budanov. Two officers began to approach him when the regiment's reconnaissance company ran up headed by Fedorov. They encircled us, separating us from Budanov, and pointed their weapons at me, taking them off safety and chambering

rounds. Everything was done very rapidly. One of the army officers started yelling at them. Budanov also shouted to Fedorov to stop and lead the scouts away. Afterward, Gen. Verbitsky and I conversed with Budanov in the command center tent. I made no accusations. Our conversation passed peacefully. Following this, Budanov was taken in a medical vehicle to the medical and sanitary battalion, and from there to Kbankala.

"Then, I lined up the regiment. Stripping the executive officer of his duties as deputy for morale building activities, I transferred these duties to the regiment's deputy commander for armament (the only deputy who did not drink with Budanov).

"Toward evening, a soldier who was the mechanic-driver of the APC-C2 (which

had been used to go to the village that night) confessed that he had driven out the previous night and told me everything.

"On the morning of March 28, the corpse was unearthed and taken to the medical battalion. A forensic examination was conducted. The corpse was washed and returned to the parents. We went to the village again for the funeral, along with General Colonel Baranov, the then combined force commander. We spoke with the people and assured them that the courts would determine everything objectively and that the guilty would be punished.

"In the evening of March 27, the APC's mechanic-driver told me how they brought the woman and dragged her into Budanov's box van. An hour and a half later, Budanov called two soldiers

to him (not the mechanic-driver — other ones who had also accompanied him to the village); at the time, the woman was still living. Twenty to thirty minutes passed before Budanov called again. The woman was dead. Budanov ordered the corpse taken away and buried. Which they did.

"I have no doubts that Kungayeva was killed and raped by Budanov.

*"From the hand of Major General (signature) V. Gerasimov.
"November 9, 2000.
"Questioned by (signature)
T. Arumyunyan."*

General Gerasimov wrote openly what the court did not announce later on. Namely, Budanov abducted, raped, and killed the victim, and then ordered the corpse to be hidden. That is, the "hero colonel" acted like a bandit, rapist, sadist and criminal — not at all like a combat officer following orders for the establishment of the "constitutional order." There were no women-snipers in Tanga-Chu, nor did anyone from this village shoot at the place of deployment of Budanov's regiment, and, in general, Budanov had no right to enter this urban center.

And here is the testimony of Yuri Budanov himself:

"To the Military Prosecutor for the North Caucasus Military District. Acknowledgment of guilt.

"I, Yuri Budanov, would like to wholeheartedly repent for what was done and communicate the following. On March 26, 2000, at 2350 hours, I called my APC's crew and ordered them to go with me to Tanga Chu, with the goal of destroying or capturing a woman-sniper... The house contained two young women and two teenage boys. [Again, no mention of the imaginary woman-sniper — Ed.] To the question

of their parents' whereabouts, the older girl replied that she did not know. Then, I ordered my subordinates to wrap the older girl in a quilt and take her to the car, which they did. After this, we brought her to the regiment's location (the Chechen girl, wrapped in a rug, was carried into the box van). I ordered my subordinates to remain outside. I had information that her mother was a sniper. Left one-on-one, I asked her where her mother was. She began to scream, bite, and try to break free. I had to apply force. A struggle ensued in the course of which I tore her shirt and brassiere. I told her to calm down, but she continued to yell and try to break free. Then, I was forced to throw her on the couch and begin strangling her. I strangled her at her throat... I did not remove the lower part of her clothes... I called my crew, ordered them to wrap her in a quilt, drive her out to a wooded area and bury her there. The crew did as I commanded. I am attaching a scheme to my acknowledgment of guilt... I simply wanted to discover the location of her parents. April 28, 2000. Budanov."

Initially Budanov claimed in court that the sniper who had shot up almost half of his entire regiment — and did so always aiming for their eyes — was his victim's mother, Roza Boshayeva. However, the elderly disabled woman in no way conformed to the image of a cold-hearted assassin with a sniper rifle in her hands. And so after half a year, Budanov began to claim that the sniper had been Elza Kungayeva herself. Further, he went to the point of claiming in court that the woman "who had been brought in for questioning" was threatening "to wrap the entrails of his daughter onto her rifle," cursing, trying to snatch his sidearm, and generally conducting herself very aggressively. He did not even remember strangling her. Only the simple-minded or a zombie is capable of believing such nonsense. Having been

brought to the unit's location, the woman, who had just turned eighteen, was left alone with a drunken muscle-head who weighed more than 100 kg and was a candidate master of Sambo. And she threatens him with violence — and even gets into a fight with him!

Currently, certain jingoists write that Yuri Budanov "was a servant to the Tsar, a father to the soldiers," "was the doom of insurgents," "personally took part in offensives," "dragged the wounded from the field of battle," and other gibberish. Some recall something entirely different: "In Chechnya, Budanov did not consider us recruits as human. He passed us without every saying hello. He treated us like live-stock — he could throw an ashtray at a person or kick them over nothing. I remember what he would say when he was angry: 'I'll bury you alive in the forest; your own mother won't find you.' And, you know, we never doubted that he was capable of it. His cruelty knew no bounds. When the commander drank, we tried to stay out of his sight. Of course, no one celebrated his death, but no one felt any particular sorrow either. So, judge for yourselves why the people refuse to talk about him," says one of Budanov's former subordinates.

During the trial, Yuri Budanov wriggled and wheedled. He denied the accusation of rape, announcing that he was impotent. He explained that he had been naked in the box van because it was hot. The fact that during the "questioning" of the young woman he had turned on the music at full volume, he explained simply as, "I felt like it." The fact that his victim had been naked, he explained by claiming that he had struggled with her after she had tried to take his weapon, and in so doing they had ripped off one another's upper garments. It is wholly understandable why Budanov stubbornly denied raping his victim, especially in a depraved manner. He under-

stood very well what awaits rapists like him in the colony. Then again, it is hard to call the eight years he spent behind bars a "punishment." Budanov was incarcerated in the Ulyanovsk Region (whose governor at that time was his "comrade in arms" General Vladimir Shamanov, who also became famous in Chechnya through his savagery and cruelty toward the civil population). There, he managed the gym and had no limitations to his visitors, telephone conversations, and so on.

"Everyone knew that Budanov had raped that Chechen girl — it's stupid to deny the obvious. This was probably why they kept him in solitary confinement for such a long time — there's no ceremony when it comes to people like him in the colony. Later, he was transferred to gen pop, where he behaved like a lout. If he needed to fight, he fought without hesitation — psychologically he was clearly not alright. Behind bars, Budanov was courageous because he knew that the administration would always look out for him." These are the words of one of the ex-colonel's fellow inmates.

However, even during the trial Budanov behaved aggressively and cockily. This was thanks to the aforementioned Shamanov, who would come to the North-Caucasus Military District Court, greet his former subordinate with a handshake, and demand that the press "keep its dirty paws off this Russian soldier and officer." Budanov told Abdulla Khamsayev, the Kungayevs' lawyer, "You, old man, will be dead when I come to take care of your people." To this the lawyer responded, "You won't see my death until you bear the punishment you deserve." Budanov's wish to "counter-terrorize" Chechnya one more time, luckily, did not come to pass. First he spent eight years in prison, and two years after his release he was killed.

It is also worth mentioning that the medical examiners had varying opinions about Budanov's criminal sanity. In the end, the psychiatrists agreed that Budanov was insane only while committing the crime, after which he returned to a normal state. Basically this means that a regiment commander with the rank of colonel, a knight of the Order of Courage, goes insane for a period of time and then goes back to being a normal person. Such are the idiosyncrasies of domestic Russian law.

It really is very hard to say with any certainty whether or not Budanov was criminally sane — especially if we consider his lesser known "feats" in Chechnya. After all, this is the same Yuri Budanov who is implicated in the illegal detention and subsequent extralegal execution of several Chechen citizens in the Argunsk Gorge. And it was this same "combat officer" Budanov who, during another nervous breakdown, almost killed several of his subordinates by tossing a hand grenade into the potbelly stove of an officers tent — just to check their "battle-readiness." It was also he who, along with his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Fedorov — another unstable person — would beat up the commander of the 160th Armored Regiment's reconnaissance company, Roman Bagreyev for refusing to follow the drunken commanders' orders to bombard Tanga-Chu village with self-propelled artillery. It was Budanov who on New Year's night in 2000, clearly enjoying himself in front of the cameras, gave the order to "fire upon previously designated targets" and added, "Merry Christmas," not for a second considering how out of place and ridiculous this piece of bravado looked in Chechnya where urban centers and peaceful citizens were being annihilated.

Beside all this, Yuri Budanov has on his conscience the deaths of at least nine

Perm OMON agents. Today, few remember that at the end of March 2000, the Chechen field commander Shamil Basayev offered nine Perm OMON agents — captured by the insurgents in the Vedensky Gorge — in exchange for Budanov, and threatened to shoot the former in the event his offer was declined. Naturally no exchange was made and the captives were killed.

No matter how they try to whitewash Budanov, regardless of what they say about him, the truth is that Yuri Budanov is a criminal who never showed any remorse for his crimes. And in the end, he ended his life like a common criminal too — shot as in a D-list gangster flick on a Moscow street.

***P.S.** On November 24, 2011, in the courtyard of house No. 38 on Komsomolsk prospekt in Moscow, at the site of ex-Colonel Yuri Budanov's murder, a commemorative plate was installed. The following inscription was engraved upon it: "On this spot on June 10, 2011, Colonel of the Guard, Yuri Budanov, was treacherously killed. He gave his life to his motherland, his honor to no one."*

By the way, the plate's installation is not approved by the municipal authorities; accordingly, its installation is illegal.



"If it were between countries, we'd call it a war. If it were a disease, we'd call it an epidemic. If it were an oil spill, we'd call it a disaster. But it is happening to women, and it's just an everyday affair."

— Michael Kaufman, founder of the White Ribbon International Men's Movement.

MARKHA ARTAKHANOVA

FROM PEACE AT HOME TO PEACE AROUND THE WORLD

"16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence"

Modern society has endured significant changes in the economic, political, environmental and social spheres. Computers and technology are constantly accelerating our lives, thereby intensifying psychological tension. These, as well as other reasons, inevitably lead to a rise in violence, one of the most dangerous trends in the world according to specialists.

The Chechen Regional Non-Governmental Organization *Sintem* regularly participates in the International *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence* Campaign, as well as the *White Ribbon* International Men's Movement, held annually from November 25 to December 10.

In 2012, the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence* Campaign was conducted for the 21st time. Over the years, thousands of organizations from more than eighty countries have taken part. It is not without some pride that our organization announces that we have been among their number for five years now.

Our organization announced its participation for the first time in 2008, the same year that we held a round table

about this topic. Afterward, we began to take part in the action routinely: every year, from November 25 to December 10, *Sintem* holds various events dedicated to preventing all types of violence against women.

We are active participants in this campaign because we believe that violence is inherently evil — it destroys, debases, exploits and suppresses its victims. The belief that violence is endemic to only deprived families is an unfounded stereotype. Violence exists in families across all layers of society, regardless of their cultural, religious, or socio-economic status.

According to data from the National Center for the Prevention of Violence ANNA, fourteen thousand women fall victim to domestic violence every year in Russia. More than 650,000 are subjected to systematic beatings by their husband, partner, or relative of the "stronger" sex. This reflects devastatingly on women's and girls' emotional and physical states.

I have before me Maryam, a thin, scared woman of uncertain age. She fiddles anxiously with a handkerchief, not knowing what to do with her dry,

untended hands. She is afraid to raise her eyes to look at me... She married for love and continues to live with him because she is married. The house is constantly full of her husband's friends. Sometimes, they all drink together. Maryam's husband often raises his hand against her, but she is already used to this — all kinds of things happen in families... Maryam forgives her husband for the beatings because she considers herself guilty of his aggression. She hopes each time that it won't happen again. She is ready to bear it, to stay silent and hope that he will improve. The most horrible thing in this situation is that Maryam's bully is her husband — the only person who is close to her (she has no friends since he forbade her to socialize with them; her parents merely repeat, "You got married, now bear it," so she doesn't tell them anything but cries softly and avoids going out in public until the bruises go away). The situation is complicated by the fact that their children also suffer — they love both of their parents...

This woman's story is one of many similar ones which, unfortunately, frequently occur in our society. This is also a vivid example of how violence destroys the lives of women and children.



Every year, between 700 and 1,000 women subjected to gender violence — at home or at work — turn to *Sintem*. That said, domestic violence cases are much more numerous, and the violence takes on diverse forms and degrees of aggression. It is unfortunate, but many women do not consider slaps, kicks, thrown things, or raised voices to be indicators of violence but instead tolerable forms of interaction.

This is partially due to gender stereotypes widely held in the social consciousness. These prescribe women certain models of behavior and endow women with a required assortment of individual qualities (subservience, patience, meekness in the face of humiliation). Curiously enough, women themselves often provoke the creation of these stereotypes in society.

Psychologists at CRNGO *Sintem* constantly deal with women who have lived through traumas, humiliations, beatings, rights' impairments, self-deprecation, and insults to their dignity. Statistics constantly reflect data about women who feel defenseless at their own homes and among their own families.

But even this data cannot be trusted since, as research shows, many women keep quiet about violence within the family due to not wishing to "air their dirty laundry."

Considering this to be a family affair, we prefer not to get involved; however, statistics show that tens of thousands of women die from the hands of men who are "close" to them. And no one knows how many women could have saved their lives, health, and worth within the family, if those around them did not prefer to look away.

"One needs no little talent to spend an entire life together and end up sick to death of one another," Robert Louis Stevenson said in his time. To add to this, the knowledge of how to live in the world with other people and to create around oneself space that is free from violence and psychological pressure, must be taught systematically and long before the first warning signs appear.

Five years of fighting violence is no short time. Over these years, we have planned and held many events across the Republic: a composition contest for older students on the topic "Peace in the house — peace around the world"; meetings between officials and various layers of society; screenings and discussions of films; a Forum Theater production; and screenings of social clips. And this is only a partial list of what we have done for the prevention of violence against women and in support of harmonious, conflict-less family relations.

By now it is an annual tradition for us to hold a workshop we call "A demon-



stration of psychological techniques for providing psychological and social support for the victims of violence." We invite representatives from non-profit organizations, teachers, students, and women who have suffered from gender violence to attend this workshop.

We are especially proud of the *Living Women's Portrait* Campaign, conducted under the aegis of the *White Ribbon* international men's movement.

Gender violence is a self-sustaining and significant problem that cannot be solved at the level of individual families or organizations. Its solution requires the coordinated efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations, law enforcement, counselors, and social workers. An appraisal of the full scale and complexity of this terrible social phenomenon is impaired by a lack of information about the degree of its ubiquity, its causes, as well as legislative gaps.

Therefore, in the modern world, the problems of gender inequality in general and gender violence in particular, require an integrated solution for psychological, educational, legal, and social challenges. Only combining our efforts will we be able to develop the necessary, practical measures for preventing violence against women and girls and for rehabilitating those who have suffered therefrom.

MARIA KATYSHEVA STORIES INVENTED BY LIFE

One of the darkest pages in the Second Chechen War was the February 5, 2000, massacre of the peaceful villagers of Aldi by OMON forces from St. Petersburg. This punitive action — in the course of which more than fifty Aldis died, among them women, children and senior citizens — in effect became the personification of the so-called Second Chechen War.

It is also one of the most convincing confirmations of just how nearsighted politicians who make fateful decisions can be. Also identifiable in this event is the utter absence of competence on the part of a multitude of domestic issues specialists and the helplessness of human rights organizations whose voice has for decades now remained simply empty noise for law enforcement.

Nevertheless, there are people who feel the pain of others as keenly as their own. They cannot remain apathetic when injustice happens right beside them. They sound all the bells and demand the cessation of lawlessness. Such people were always inconvenient for those in power. They are either swatted away like annoying insects or punished for being to conscientious. For, "up above," where the global issues that demand a special responsibility are being resolved, these issues are frequently examined from the perspective of corporate or special interests. Whole institutions are working and great sacrifices are being made to benefit the mighty of this world.

But the "inconvenient" go on with their inconvenient-but-necessary work of restoring justice, to the extent that their abilities allow. Such is the St. Petersburg-based, Regional Public Human Rights Organization *House of Peace and Non-violence*. Its associates focus on the dissemination of information about nonviolent methods of conflict resolution — its recurring area of

interest is the war in Chechnya. It accords special attention to the bloody episode in Aldi. Why, you ask? Because the organization's associates are St. Petersburg natives who love their native city and are ashamed of their fellows' actions. They do everything they can to wash this shameful stain from the name of their wonderful Northern Capital. They do not want people in Chechnya to shudder or feel a chill of horror at the words "St. Petersburg." They want St. Petersburg to be associated in Chechen minds not with OMON, but with the Hermitage, the Peterhof, the beauty of the architecture, the wealth of its culture, and the hospitality of its inhabitants. It was with this in mind that they sought the opportunity to host children from the village of Aldi. They organized a website dedicated to this mission. They began to regularly conduct training sessions and seminars for school children, their parents and teachers, as well as art contests aimed at forming interethnic cultural learning. They set out to dismantle the prejudices between people of different faiths and ethnicities.

Aside from this, they wish to build bridges between people of different ethnicities — people who during the Chechen conflict, willingly or not, ended up in different positions — in different, as they say, camps — but who suffered equally. The war reaped a rich harvest here: its victims were both Chechens and Russians, as well as Chechen inhabitants of other ethnicities. Everyone's wounds hurt equally.

To avoid blaming each other, but to understand and forgive one another — this was the subject of a recent event organized by the *House of Peace and Non-violence* in St. Petersburg. It was a peacemaking meeting between women of various nationalities, whose fates had been inalienably tied to the Chechen land. The participants included an archivist, a librarian, an artist, teachers, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Each woman told of what she had lived through, of her losses and her pain. And it turned out that all of them had the same experiences, losses, and hurts. And thus, empathy was born, as well as the understanding that though the wounds might be different, the scars will never heal for those who bore the brunt of those complicated years.

There were confessions. There were shared tears and even at times friendly laughter. The *DOSH* correspondent's voice recorder captured many stories from the war years as well as the pre-war period (beginning in the 90s). We would have liked to publish everything but unfortunately cannot do so at the moment. Therefore, on yet another anniversary of the Chechen campaign's beginning, paying tribute to the memory of its victims, we decided to print only some of the recollections — those which are directly related to the war. It is true that much has already been written on this topic, but it remains inexhaustible. Every new story reveals new horizons and illuminates new colors and is therefore valuable.



At the Anna Akhmatova Museum, which provided the meeting's participants with a free tour of the Museum followed by a tea reception with the Museum's director and associates.

From Larisa's story:

When the first tanks entered Grozny — you should have seen it. Narrow little streets led to the central square. How could someone send a tank division down those narrow streets? All those boys there... It was a terrifying, horrible picture... They were scattered just like that... And even scarier was that in our heads, in the heads of the Groznyans, it just didn't register that we could be killed. But why? It's such a tiny little handful of land... And Grachev said, "I will establish constitutional order within 24 hours." Of course people weren't expecting that the soldiers who were entering as saviors, as helpers, would start killing people over nothing.

Meanwhile, those boys... I came home and said, "The horror! That poor mother who saw her child off to the army, and he, the poor fellow, is lying on the street, burned, legless, armless." Because no one would even bury them. And his mother would never find him. Soldiers all over the place, covered with whatever was around, just enough to keep the dogs from eating the remains.

...My sister had a friend, Sveta Vasilchikova, a Jew. She sat through the thing in a cellar in the center of town. Then, Israel began to evacuate Jews from the conflict zone. Sveta said that she wouldn't go alone: that she'd take my three children to Israel, clothe

them, and feed them. When she sent the first hundred dollars, it seemed to me like such a huge sum of money — "I will buy so much food," I thought.

...There was so much grief on both sides. A woman I knew, Satsita, went to get fuel and left her children in the basement. She picked up a bundle of firewood and ran home but didn't make it: a bomb fell right on the basement and killed all five of her children. She is now blind and only has one arm. It's very hard for her. At first she didn't want to live at all. These days we take her out during the holidays, talk her into putting on a pretty dress. She cries: "Why did God take my vision too — otherwise, I could at least look at the photographs of my children."

They say a soldier isn't responsible — he is compelled because an order is an order. But no one forced him to cut people, to castrate them. The soldiers varied as well. When we were running through the alleys with my mother-in-law, we would come across soldiers, and we would recoil from them — but they would recoil from us too.

From Raisa's story:

My friend has an older sister. When the hostilities started, her 18-year-old son rushed off for his father (his father lived across town). Crossing the street, he was killed by a sniper. This boy was left lying there for more than a week. It was impossible to come close enough to

retrieve the body. My friend's sister was literally going insane: she didn't know what to do. She couldn't go anywhere. Later there was a ceasefire and the men began to collect the corpses. The boy had a passport, so they brought him to the address. She buried him. About a month went by. She noticed that her younger son was behaving strangely. He wouldn't eat anything and kept hiding the food in his pockets. The food began to vanish. She started spying on him. He would take some food and some water and go off into the ruins. One evening as he was coming back, she grabbed him: "Where are you going? Tell me!"

"I thought," she told me, "that he was getting into something bad, going off to blow something up. The kids are like that after all." He says, "You can beat me, but you won't change anything." "Tell me the truth," she says. And he replies, "Over there in the ruins, in the kindergarten's basement, there's a Russian soldier. He's been sitting there a week already. I've been bringing him food."

"When it got dark," she tells, "we took some clothes that was left from my son and went to those ruins. We went down to the basement. When he saw that there was a woman with the boy, he cowered into a corner and started shaking." "I'm begging you," he said. "Don't hurt me." It turned out that he was about 18 years old too and that he ran away from his unit because they would beat him viciously. He couldn't handle it all. He couldn't kill and was mocked for it and insulted.

They disguised this soldier and, practically crawling so that the neighbors wouldn't notice, took him home. He was in a horrible state — sick and covered in lesions. The washed him and fed him. They concealed him quite seriously: dug a pit under the bed and covered it with boards. No one knew. The woman asked for his address, the phone number of his parents. He wrote

it down. She called her sister and left her to watch his boy. Herself, she went to Nazran, sent a telegram to his parents, and then waited for the reply. She let them know when they could come, what and how they had to do things, where to go, so that they wouldn't have to ask anything of anyone. About two or three months later, when things were settling down for a bit, the parents came. Right at her doorstep they fell on their knees before this woman, thanking her for saving their son.

Then they took their boy. She helped them smuggle him out. They hired a car, spent a ton of money, stuck him in the trunk and drove him out like that. And when the second campaign began, the parents of this guy (he was their only son) invited their entire family — even me, though I was just a friend — invited us all to come stay with them. My friend went. They became friends. I was astounded that, having lost a son, she found the strength to save this Russian boy.

From Lida's story:

My Russian friend Olya, left with her husband for Kizlyar in the 90s. She was expecting, and I would go visit her. One day I was on my way home, in Shelkovskaya, when at the Kizlyar post, an acquaintance told me: "You really shouldn't go back and forth like this; better stay at home." I didn't pay attention to his words at the time. Two days later, I heard that Raduyev had taken Kizlyar. Meanwhile, Olya was about to give birth...

Another important point was that around the end of the 80s, a Chechen guy had been in love with Olya. But they were forbidden from being together. She married someone else, and he married a Chechen.

And here Olya gave birth to a boy in the maternity ward of a captured hospital...

Some time later, when it all ended, I saw Olya and saw her boy. She told me the following story.

When Raduyev's forces entered the city, Konya (this is how we called her ex-beau) was among them. He came up to the second floor and saw his former love there. Remember how they let the first ten women go? That was him. He forced them to let them go. He apologized variously, saying, "We didn't come to capture a hospital; we were going after a helicopter field, under orders from Dudayev, to take these three helicopters..." These women were released. And when Raduyev's forces were leaving through Pervomaysk, Konya was killed while transporting the wounded. It was a shocking story.

From Maria's story:

It wasn't nations that were fighting. I know two families from Koshkeldi who saved a boy from a damaged tank in which everyone else had died. They kept him, tended to him and evacuated him. I also know a little soldier from Tikhvin who was in captivity. The locals also helped save him. His mother brought a million rubles to pay Raduyev's forces for him, but they didn't release him anyway, kept him in the cellar and sometimes let him out to meet his mother. "I gave you a million," she begged them, "give me my son." The next time she came, there was a man sitting in the entryway. He said, "What was man given legs for?" She got the hint, went to the house where she was staying, and the hostess with her son drove out the mother and her son.

From Svetlana's story:

...During the war, we could not get out. My mother was sick. It was very scary. During the shooting, people would go down to the basement in the university. The basement is huge: all the inhabitants would hide down there. My

mother couldn't move well at all, so we couldn't make it downstairs. All I could do was put the couch in the hallway and hope that the wall would maybe shelter us from the shrapnel. I put her on the couch and lay down in the entryway. My mother didn't want to leave Grozny because all our relatives' graves were there. She was born in Grozny, her mother and grandmother as well...

From Sveta's story:

The first bombardment found me in Pervomaik Stanitsa, where I was by accident. I was confronted with falling bombs, chaos, thunder. Disarray. Chechen men running down the street, simple village guys. And they're yelling so astonished, "Why are the bombs falling? Let's go call Maria Ivanova..." Maria Ivanova was the teacher. These were grown men calling on a Russian teacher as an authority. Maria Ivanova comes out, old, with shaking hands, and says, "These are my students. There aren't any bandits here. These are my boys, they are good. That there is a tractor driver. He has eight children. Why are you bombing them?" That Russian teacher did more for our Russia (not only for Chechnya but for all of Russia) than any one of those ministers had ever done. Maybe those men will be merciful because she taught them what was right, read Checkhov to them, read them *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*.

From Satsita's story:

In 1999 the following story happened to me. I was going to work at the residential complex. I was a tiny, gaunt girl who had come up from the cellar. And as it happens, a guy came up to me. I didn't pretend to be anything, simply answered his questions the best I could. He accompanied me to the library. And came to see me every day. I did not know what his name was,

I wasn't even interested. The girls in the library would say, "Your stranger came by." Later though, I asked after all. His name was Lom-Ali.

The military campaign began. I ran to the library to load the books and transport them away from the shooting. And he showed up too. In camo-fatigues. I would come, load up the books and drive them home. I drove about six to seven thousand books out of there. When I would run up to the library, my eyes would go every-which-way. I didn't know what to load: I wanted this and that and there's Jules Verne.... I understood that I wouldn't be able to save everything. When I came for the last time... It was already horrible there. He helped me load the books and, saying goodbye, gave me... a doll. I never saw him again. I named the doll Manyasha.

Later — I remember it as if it was yesterday — it was April 19, 2000. I had a dream. In the dream, my Manyasha was all mangled, lying beneath a heap of bricks. I was trying to pull her out, digging at the clutter to reach her, but she kept being buried under bigger and bigger rocks. I pull her out — there's only a head, the body's gone. I wake up. Manyasha is lying beside me. The next day, April 20, I accidentally ran into a woman I knew. We worked together. She says, "Do you know what happened with Lom-Ali?" "No, I don't," I reply. "He was under Shato, with six guys. The sat down to warm themselves when a rocket attack started. Lom-Ali was sitting, warming his feet, and his head was torn off. The body is in one piece, but the head is gone, that's how they buried him, headless..."

Seven to eight months went by. Some guy showed up at my library and asked, "Are you Satsita?" "Yes" "I came to look at you." And he showed me a photograph that Lom-Ali took of me when I was sitting on a bench in the residential complex.

"Lom-Ali would talk about how smart you were, how you read poetry."

When they killed him, they found this photograph in his passport. He found me through the photograph.

I never saw him in my dreams again.

Elena Vilenskaya (project manager):

"In School No. 590 in St. Petersburg, museum activities are well regulated, and there is space reserved for exhibitions. There is a lady in charge there who suggested the following: let's hold a contest of children's drawings called "War in my lifetime," on the topic of the war in Chechnya. Honestly, we were surprised: this topic is taboo everywhere, and here someone's asking for drawings. Many drawings were presented, from Chechen children and from other regions in Russia, but all of them dealt with the two wars in Chechnya. Moreover, children would come to this exhibit on field trips. We were shocked: the idea itself, a field trip for second-graders — it seemed strange that it came from the schools. How could we explain all of this to the kids? But — aside from one boy who asked, "Are these our guys or the Germans?" — all of them understood. And there was so much compassion, such pain on their faces. We read aloud an essay by a Chechen boy named Yusup, whose parents had died, and one boy began to cry and started screaming. "It's no possible to listen to this!" It hurt him so much. The parents later told us, "Thank you so much for organizing this exhibit. Our children didn't know anything about this."

We wanted the winners of the competition to meet one another. Though, to tell the truth, there were concerns because the kids came from Chechnya with grown-ups, as well as adults from other regions around Russia, who had

many acquaintances and neighbors who had fought in Chechnya. But everything was very touching. One girl was from Eisk, and we had no money to pay for her ticket. So her father — he worked for EMERCOM — who had friends who had fought in Chechnya took a vacation. His travel was paid for, and they all came together.

Furthermore, he said that working on that essay had been a family activity. There was another girl whose father had fought in Chechnya: her recollections were of how they collected money to bury the officers and how the wives went around the apartments to do so. On the other side there was a boy, Yusup, whose parents would travel to sell cucumbers. At a checkpoint they were directed aside — then, there was an explosion and they were killed. We saw that the children understood everything. There was compassion, understanding, pain. One boy kept quiet the entire time (as we later understood, he was reexamining everything). And his father, a teacher from Tatarstan, told us, "That meeting turned everything upside down for me." All of his neighbors fought in Chechnya. "I will tell everyone," he said. It seems that he did such a good job of it that the next year one of his students — a Russian girl — wrote the "War diary of a Chechen girl." One woman from Chechnya helped us select these essays. She cried so hard reading the "Diary"; she said, "How keenly she felt everything through; it was all true." Yet, she had never met the Chechen children. One girl from Volgograd drew the destruction of Grozny. We underestimate children, but they will probably overcome the distrust before the adults do.

From Natasha's story:

...About how people from different sides can meet in one place. My girlfriend married a Chechen. I went with her to my aunt's house in the residential complex. Her Chechen relatives gave her a

ride. There was a woman who lived with my aunt, and during the war she made friends with my friend. And so we enter the house. The guys — Murad and Aslan — are in camouflage: it's evident they're not federals. My aunt's friend stares at them, then turns to my aunt and says, "See Galya how interesting life turns out: such a thing happened to you, and now there's people in your house who had been fighting." Then she retold what had happened to my aunt. (We don't talk about it with her because she is already past seventy and it's traumatizing for her.) She spent both wars in Grozny as a hypertensive patient. One day she heard a knocking, it was a woman. My aunt opened the door and some people in camouflaged uniforms burst in, tied her up, taped her mouth shut, and began to demand money and gold. But she didn't have anything of the kind, and in general there was already nothing left in the apartment... But they kept on making demands. My aunt survived, but what she had to live through traumatized her deeply. It's a very painful topic for her; she barely survived. To this day, probably, she is suffering. She cannot hear about the war or anything related — even though, during the war, she took care of her neighbor and changed his dressings. She is a medic and helping the wounded is holy for her. This, despite the fact that her neighbor had been an insurgent.

From Satsita's story (a true story that resembles an anecdote):

In 2001, a very old Russian grandmother came up to me in the library. She said that she had seen the library and came in to make an offer. "I have so many books," she says. "Perhaps you'll take them from me? I don't have any use for them." We began to talk. She lived near the tram depot. People from Grozny know the terrible events that happened there, what terrible battles

took place. So she says, "Well, during the first campaign I almost died from hunger. So at the outset of the second campaign, I pickled so many cucumbers and tomatoes, and how they saved me. Imagine dear, I am sitting there early one morning and someone rings. A little, gaunt, hungry insurgent is standing there. He says, 'Grandma, give me something to eat.'" She tells all this liltily, playfully. "Well," she says, "I dug around and got some pickles and gave him some bread. Fed him. Three hours later there's more knocking. Now there are some little soldiers standing there, also asking for food. I gave them some pickles and tomatoes as well. So they kept coming. And they came often. But I had a lot of tomatoes pickled. I didn't need that many for myself. Only, I kept thinking: 'I hope they don't come at the same time. They'll shoot each other.' I should have knocked on wood. There's a knocking at the door and there they are — these and those. What to do? I tell them, 'Don't start fighting now. I have plenty of cucumbers.' I gave them some pickles. One says, 'You, Ivan, don't start shooting until I walk away three hundred meters.' And the other replies, 'And you, Makhmud, don't start shooting until I walk five hundred. After that, go ahead and shoot.' And pickles I have aplenty still."

From Larisa's story:

Today, when we were recalling the pre-war years, I heard a lot of negative things about my people. How we were killing people and capturing apartments. But the main thing, I think, is that when everyone goes home, having learned of other stories here, they will take a speck of something good away with them. Maybe they will say that not all Chechens are bad, and I'll be happy that it was a good meeting. And I will say at home that not all Russians in St. Petersburg hate us. When I was about to come here, my husband said, "Watch out, you're a



darkie, don't go out on the street, don't try to teach people just because you're a teacher, they can beat you up." I will call him today and tell him, "They didn't beat me. Turns out that there are those who love and understand."

From Lida's presentation:

A year ago in Kabardino, three children were performing salad beside the Belaya River — a Kabardian, a Lezgian and a Chechen. The first two had not yet experienced the war, while the Chechen had. Mika, the Kabardian, says, "If at this moment some insurgents were to emerge from the forest and say, 'Either we'll kill you or you come with us to fight.' I would go with them." The Lezgian says, "If they gave me money, I would go too. I wouldn't go for nothing." But the Chechen says, "I would let them kill me." "Why?" the others ask. "Don't you want revenge?" The Chechen boy replies, "The Qur'an says that if I exact revenge, I will be satisfied with myself, but if I forgive, then God will respect me — God will accept me."

Those who survived this war, by and large understand that our children understand. If it weren't for the politicians and the mass media, which stoke interethnic tensions, understanding would be even better.

It is never too late and never too much to ask for forgiveness. Both for myself, and for those who cannot ask — who are sorry but cannot say it. And even for those who are not sorry — for those who stuck to their principles.

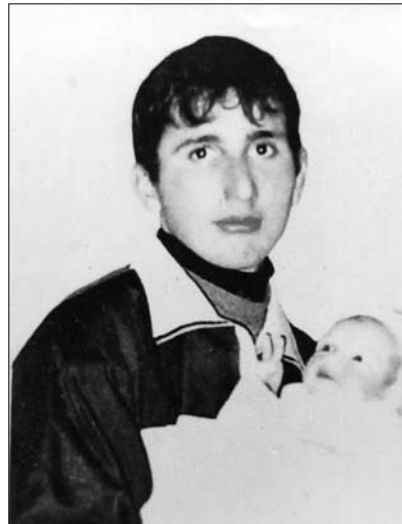
DOSH presents the latest tragic story in its ongoing section, "Looking for Them and Waiting for Them" — about the people who disappeared during the two wars in Chechnya: beginning in DOSH Issue 4(30) 2010 and continuing in all subsequent issues.

The Nineteenth Story

"You need to be exterminated!"

In the early 2000s, inhabitants of the Chechen Republic could not sense the passage of time. Over and over again, they received terrifying news: someone had been killed, someone wounded, someone arrested. Most people were outside of Chechnya. The refugees located in Ingushetia were constantly darting between that Republic and Chechnya. This was for reasons of life and death: the need to find out about relatives, find work, flee the nightmare called *zachistka* ("sweeps" or "clean-up operations"), deliver humanitarian aid to seniors who did not wish to leave their native places, and many others. There were several roads from Chechnya to Ingushetia, both highways and rural routes. The rural routes had checkpoints which also checked passports; however, the soldiers here were not conscripts and were therefore less brutal. They were sometimes tired and hungry and sent by unaccountable commanders away from the federal highways and subsequently from profit. But here too, monstrous events would occur — the roads were often mined, and peaceful people and even the soldiers themselves would step on the mines.

In the summer of 2001, on one of the rural roads into Ingushetia, a bus hit a mine. The result was dead, wounded, terrified women and children. Among the wounded was Rustam Khutsayev. "That day was the beginning of our troubles," explains the man's father, Isa Khutsayev. "The war was a terrible catastrophe in itself, but our family tragedy began on that day." Rustam was delivered to the



Khutsayev Movsar

Ordzhonikidzevskaya Stanitsa with severe trauma. From there, he was taken by federal forces. In critical condition and on an IV, Rustam was unlikely to comprehend what was happening. Meanwhile, women tried heroically to save him from the soldiers, while the latter beat them with the butts of their rifles. A succession of tribulations began for the family. It was December 2001. On the night of December 15, the Khutsayev family, residing at 40 ul. Sportivnaya, Gekhi Village, was preparing for the Feast of Breaking the Fast — Eid al-Fitr. Their mood was far from festive: the war was underway; Rustam was in pretrial custody; they were surrounded by rubble, sorrow and daily news of someone dying or being abducted. However, this festival is important to all Muslims, so they decided to prepare some food and perk themselves up. The winter days are very short. In wartime they



Khutsayev Beslan

became shorter still — either from the bombing or because the fragile daylight fled the cruelty that had become the daily norm for those who caused it. They were late with the preparations that night, perhaps because they prepared haltingly, only for the sake of tradition. They did not know that that night another tragedy would visit the family, one much more terrifying than what had happened to Rustam. Movsar stepped out into the courtyard and, coming back, announced that there were soldiers out there. Practically at the same time, armed men in camouflaged uniforms burst into the foyer and began to yell, "Passport control! All the men come out! On the double! We'll blow up the house and children! Out into the yard! On the double! Face down on the ground! Hands behind your back or we blow the house up with the kids!" They led Isa, Beslan, and Movsar out to the street and began to

kick and beat them with their rifle butts. Inside the house, they made themselves "at home": they beat the women and snatched at everything that was not bolted down. Aside from everything valuable, they took with them the clothes of the month-year-old granddaughter, as well as the sweets that had been prepared for the festival. Isa could barely see through his blood, but upon seeing how they were beating Beslan and Movsar, he could not bear it; he asked, "What is this for?" Instantly he received a boot to the face and heard a voice full of hate: "Bitch! Shut up! What don't you get? Chechens are born bandits! All of you need to be exterminated!" Once they had finished robbing the house, they went away. They took the beaten and bleeding brothers with them. Covered in blood and unconscious, Isa remained lying in the yard.

Everything in the house was busted and broken. The robbers took all the documents with them, including Movsar's award — he was a wrestler who had won multiple regional and republican tournaments. Three large, rolled-up rugs were left behind, evidently forgotten in haste. However, they came back for them the next night. Finding the house empty, they turned on a stove burner and threw a lit piece of paper inside. But the wet paper did not ignite properly and went out. This lucky circumstance also saved the neighbors' house from the explosion. The heavy burden of family responsibility alighted on the shoulders of Birlant, the woman of the house. Many years have gone by since then, but the mother's deep wounds have not healed. To this day she remembers every detail from that night. The faces of her sons remain before her eyes. They were only children, after all — Beslan was 20 and Movsar was 16. She is tormented by the same question that earned Isa a kick to his face: "What is this for?" How

They led Isa, Beslan, and Movsar out to the street and began to kick and beat them with their rifle butts. Inside the house, they made themselves "at home": they beat the women and snatched at everything that was not bolted down. Aside from everything valuable, they took with them the clothes of the month-year-old granddaughter, as well as the sweets that had been prepared for the festival. Isa could barely see through his blood, but upon seeing how they were beating Beslan and Movsar, he could not bear it; he asked, "What is this for?" Instantly he received a boot to the face and heard a voice full of hate: "Bitch! Shut up! What don't you get? Chechens are born bandits! All of you need to be exterminated!" Once they had finished robbing the house, they went away. They took the beaten and bleeding brothers with them. Covered in blood and unconscious, Isa remained lying in the yard.

many times has she awoken at night to sob silently into the pillow — how many times has she addressed Allah, begging for her sons? Only He knows. An endless search, incomprehensible threats from the law's guardians, as the one offered by the prosecutor: "Better not get involved. They're not joking around with this stuff at the moment." All of it just deepened the family's sorrow. Not joking around with what? Who are they? Why are warnings like this issued in the prosecutor's office — the place people come to file complaints about their family members' abductions? These questions remain unanswered. Time went on and the relatives heard nothing. Rustam was found guilty on several counts, though he did not admit to a single one. But the fact that he is Chechen is grounds enough for the judges to render a conviction and pass a sentence that the prosecution requests. The relatives expected nothing else. Since Rustam was taken to the pretrial detention facility, and their two other sons were abducted, they understood: all Chechens are "guilty of something," and in Russia, the law is on the side of the powerful, even if they are iniquitous. The so-called justice system is nothing more than an insult. Rustam is still serving his sentence. Nothing is known about Beslan and Movsar, except for...

On April 2, 2002, in the Urus-Martanovsky District, the body parts of people who had been blown up were discovered in the gardens of the Michurin State Farm. Also uncovered at this site were the clothes that the Khutsayev brothers had been wearing at the time of their arrest. Even such a grave fact did not serve as grounds for a serious inquiry. Though, had a Chechen as much as been suspected, the "guilty party" would have instantly been "ascertained" and "tried."

One cannot help but recall the video that flooded the markets of Ingushetia. The clip shows Chechens, supposedly captured in Komsomolsk, shuffle naked and beaten from trucks into train cars. They cover their nakedness with their arms as soldiers rain blows and shouts upon them. It is clear that they are being transported to wherever it is that they will serve out their sentences.

Everything is monstrous in this story — from its beginning to its end. Including even that the victims' relatives are forced to relive the horrors of that night as I ask them these inevitable and unbearable questions which can only deepen their sorrow — as I speak sincere words that they, most likely, do not believe. A lump forms in my throat from the helplessness.

The Twentieth Story

"If he's innocent, he'll come back"?

Umatkhadzhi Ibrahimov, born 1938, is looking for her son, Rizvan Ibrahimov, born 1977. He clearly remembers the night when his son was abducted from his home on 26 ul. Bezymyannaya, corpus 15, Urus-Martani, Urus-Martanovsky District. The moon shone brightly; it was very light out, and nothing suggested disaster. It was the night of December 28, 2002. The parents were happy because Rizvan had come back from Ingushetia. He had been living in Malgobek temporarily, working part-time to survive the war and feed their family. There was neither habitual family comfort there nor home-cooked food, and he was often anxious for his relatives. But there was no other way out. At home in Chechnya, Rizvan could not find work. Moreover, it was still a dangerous place to live. And so, Rizvan took whatever work came his way in Ingushetia — so long as it paid. This is how they lived. Every one of Rizvan's visits was an occasion for celebration. That evening, everyone was in a heightened mood. A

boxing match with Muhammad-Ali was being shown on TV. Umatkhadzhi was watching it with everyone else. Tamara was tending to the house. The parents, looking at their son, thought about how another difficult day had gone by, but everyone remained alive and healthy, which meant that everything was good, and there was hope that the war would soon be over. Tamara's and Umatkhadzhi's happiness, however, was not to last. Everything changed instantly.

The match on the TV had not yet ended when armed men in camouflaged uniforms burst into the house. "Bitches! Get down!" they yelled, beating everyone. "On the ground! Face down! We'll blow the house up!" They tore around the house like wraiths, crushing and breaking everything that got in their way. They brought in a masked man and, pointing at Rizvan, asked him, "This one?" The man nodded. A storm of blows crashed down on Rizvan: they kicked him and beat



Rizvan Ibrahimov

him with their rifles' butts. Then they dragged the bloody and bruised man out into the street. Someone barked, "Get down! If anyone moves, we'll blow the house!" For some time, Umatkhadzhi remained in shock, then, jumping up, he rushed out to the street after the abductors. The old man ran for a long time, through courtyards of loose snow. He kept running even when he heard the rumble of the departing personnel carrier. The next morning, not wasting time, Umatkhadzhi began searching for his son. The neighbors had seen the uninvited guests leave their APC at another street and head over to the Ibrahimovs'. They had counted 70 people. The first thing Umatkhadzhi did was go to Shirvani Yasayev, the

The old man ran for a long time, through courtyards of loose snow. He kept running even when he heard the rumble of the departing personnel carrier. The next morning, not wasting time, Umatkhadzhi began searching for his son. The neighbors had seen the uninvited guests leave their APC at another street and head over to the Ibrahimovs'. They had counted 70 people. The first thing Umatkhadzhi did was go to Shirvani Yasayev, the head of the administration for the Urus-Martanovsky District. Mr. Yasayev heard him out and uttered a phrase that sounded like a sentence: "If he's innocent, he'll come back." All these years of searching later, how many official conversations have there been? How many promises, unclear suppositions and empty, bored looks? How many indefinite, dry, and soulless evasions? Each evasion containing phrases that made one want to howl: "Criminal charges have been filed." "Much work has been done." "The implemented measures did not allow us to establish the location of R. Ibrahimov and the persons involved in the crime."

head of the administration for the Urus-Martanovsky District. Mr. Yasayev heard him out and uttered a phrase that sounded like a sentence: "If he's innocent, he'll come back." All these years of searching later, how many official conversations have there been? How many promises, unclear suppositions and empty, bored looks? How many indefinite, dry, and soulless evasions? Each evasion containing phrases that made one want to howl: "Criminal charges have been filed." "Much work has been done." "The implemented measures did not allow us to establish the location of R. Ibrahimov and the persons involved in the crime." Umatkhadzhi remembers how he had rushed that morning to begin searching for his son — so long as there were still tracks in the snow, so long as the witnesses were still living, healthy, and could testify. Everything was for naught. He did not know then that no one would bother to look for Rizvan — that Shirvani Yasayev's words really had been a sentence. That these words also echoed the officials' take on what had happened. War is a difficult trial. They survived the best they knew how.

Some worked part-time jobs and vanished tracelessly; others, licking the dust from the new boss's boots, rendered convictions without trial or investigation. "Vanished just like that," the old man says measured and calmly. "No matter how much we searched, there were no traces." But the more he talks, the more keenly one feels the depth of his pain. One begins to understand that it is completely impossible to feel what he feels, his sorrow. It is only what a parent can feel. Umatkhadzhi's piercing, wise look disconcerts me more and more. But... despite it, I go on asking questions, trying to maintain my composure. And he, in the meantime goes on explaining: "Mother couldn't bear it. She took ill and died. Now things have gotten really bad." I understand him: the war, his son's abduction — his dole had already been too much to stolidly bear his wife's passing. Again and again asking my questions, I drive him to return to a time that he has never really left. Anticipating my next question, Umatkhadzhi says, "And that person, who fingered Rizvan that night, was simply weak and unfortunate. There

were rumors then that they would grab any youth, torture him, and demand that he name insurgents. Some couldn't take it and would indicate the innocent — sometimes their neighbors or relatives. He can only be pitied." The suffering he survived has not embittered Umatkhadzhi. He has not forgotten how to pity and even maybe how to forgive. He understood a long time ago that those who abducted his son and those for whom "the implemented measures did not allow us to establish the location of R. Ibrahimov and the persons involved in the committed crime," are effectively accomplices. That a nation's law, set down for all of its citizens, is applied variously. Everything depends on one's ethnicity. In a country where, at that time, one could destroy anyone one disliked simply based on that person being Chechen, there was no justice to be found. The pain of a father who discovered and experienced for himself the full infamy of a disregard for the law, is immeasurable.

That evening, everyone was in a heightened mood. A boxing match with Muhammad-Ali was being shown on TV. Umatkhadzhi was watching it with everyone else. Tamara was tending to the house. The parents, looking at their son, thought about how another difficult day had gone by, but everyone remained alive and healthy, which meant that everything was good, and there was hope that the war would soon be over. Tamara's and Umatkhadzhi's happiness, however, was not to last. Everything changed instantly.



TAUS SERGANOVA
IN A COUNTRY
BACK FROM WAR

On the values of the Chechen youth — survey results

In the last few years, the Russian mass media has begun to focus on Chechnya not as an area of postwar reconstruction, but as a republic with a system of governance worthy of emulation by the other regions of Russia. Judging by the results of the "Happiness Index of Russian Cities" poll — conducted in August 2012 by the *NewsEffector* Monitoring Agency and the *Regions of Russia* Fund for Regional Research — the happiest people live in Grozny.

Visitors from other regions and nations see modern cities, clean streets and avenues, well-kept, grandiose office buildings and complexes, entertainment centers, restaurants and cafés at every step, boutiques and supermarkets bursting from international imports. In general, these sights leave a rosy impression on guests. The locals also seem completely satisfied. Truly, one cannot help but be happy that the Chechen Republic has transformed so quickly before one's eyes. But

Chechnya is first and foremost the people who live there, and therefore one wants to recall the wartime inscription: "People live here!" And it is what they feel and how they live today — especially the younger generation, the "children of the war" who are now 18–20 years old — that we set out to find out with our survey of Chechen university students.

The Interregional Non-Governmental Organization *Caucasus Initiative Center*

conducted a survey of students at Chechen universities, asking the following questions:

- 1. What do you value most in your life?
a) family
b) education
c) career
d) work
- 2. Where are you looking to build your future and career?

- a) in Chechnya
b) in Russia
c) abroad
- 3. In your opinion, what areas of life require qualitative changes in Chechnya and Russia?

a) education
b) health care
c) youth policy
d) national policy

- e) employment and social security
- f) other (provide your own answer)

We surveyed 1,120 students — 856 men and 264 women. The survey results were as follows:

In our conversations, the surveyed students explained how they chose between the various answers. Family remains the most valued thing for everyone because familial relations

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
family at 1st place with 100%	in Chechnya — 2%	health care — 62%
education at 2nd with 72%	in Russia — 20%	national policy — 57.2%
work at 3rd with 52%	abroad — 78%	employment and social security — 47%
career at 4th with 22%		youth policy — 37%
		education — 36.7%



were always a guarantee of certain help, support, and protection in Chechen society. Though, one too must support one's relatives in everything. Many young people understand that education is necessary to find work, support oneself and one's loved ones. It is possible that work itself is not yet a pressing issue for students, but the seniors are already considering and discussing their lives after graduation.

That said, all of those surveyed who imagine their future and careers outside of the Chechen Republic are young men. But to the question of why they choose other regions and nations, almost every one answered that it was due to a lack of prospects in the Republic. Even if they find work, it will either be unqualified or bureaucratic, and they will have to play by someone else's rules or pay serious amounts of money for a "profitable position."

The surveyed students consider the "sickest" area in Chechnya and Russia to be health care. Across the Republic, rates of illnesses such as cardiovascular

disease, cancer, and tuberculosis are very high. Many spoke of the impossibility of obtaining an accurate diagnosis in the Republic: there are hospitals and clinics that have the right equipment, but there are very few qualified doctors. Because of this, many have to travel to other Russian regions or even abroad, spending the last of their money, or ask relatives (or acquaintances) for help to get treatment.

Commenting on the problem of domestic policy in Russia, the youth spoke of our nation becoming half-racist, of the courting of ethnic antipathy by various public figures and mass media, of the establishment and operation in Russia of nationalist and fascist organizations.

I would like to provide some excerpts from these students on various topics.

On elections

"A dishonest country cannot hold fair elections. I am driven insane whenever they gather up people and tell them that they must vote for this or that party or presidential candidate. That there is dishonesty. The following happened during our elections: they forced people to go vote by force, say-

ing that if they did not go, they would be fired etc. I don't understand why they waste money on cameras and everything else. Better they give it to the people, if they'll put whomever they want at the head of the country anyway. I don't understand why they make people suffer... Well, that's probably what politics is. Maybe, sometime we'll have fair elections, but I'm not hopeful."

"Newspaper and magazine headlines frequently talk about fair elections. I hear about them every day on television, but I seriously doubt that today's generation of Russians have even once participated in such an event. Everyone sees fair elections in Russia as something unreachable, something which existed sometime in the distant past or even exists to this day but outside of the Russian Federation."

"I believe that fair elections could not be held in Russia because the conditions for fair elections do not exist — that is, a fair electoral system, fair electoral law, and a fair political system. For many years now, we have seen only that we are being 'fairly' robbed, under various pretexts and without anyone trying to hide it. The robbery started back in 1991 with the theft of the pop-

ulace's savings from the Savings Bank of the Russian Federation. Today, the only thing that's changed is the method of stealing — the fact of robbery itself remains unchanged."

"I believe that Russia can hold fair elections. Can they happen this year? No, because the rules themselves are unfair and undemocratic. But on the whole, Russia is in no way worse than other countries.

"Russia never had and doesn't have actual democracy, so there have never been fair elections. Before, they were unfair in terms of the process itself, now they are unfair not just within the process but also in terms of gaining access to the process. That is, even if there were some fantasy in which they would let everyone go on television, then, to go through that door, behind which lies that electoral space, they would allow only those who have demonstrated some kind of loyalty to the authorities — all the others would not be registered under various pretexts."

On the freedom to do business

"If we look at our own republic separately, then we're in bad shape. We pay not just taxes but many other levies as well.

"How are you supposed to do business fairly after that?

"It follows that even if the people have the opportunity to do business fairly, the government doesn't let them!"

"Either you are honest, or you are rich — this dilemma is in effect today too. The overwhelming majority of Russians and Chechens simply doesn't believe in the compatibility of ethical norms and business. Everything hinges on profit volume; that is, the scale of the business's operations."

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On ethics

"In our modern society, emphasis is placed on material enrichment, which leads to a decrease in ethical qualities and higher values. Therein lies the tragedy of contemporary Chechen society.

"When yet another official blurts something vapid and absurd into the empty space before him, the audience will applaud, showing a slavish obsequy. The real problem is that the individual has lost his voice, lost his 'I,' lost himself in this natural calamity that we call 'modern society.'"

On Education

"You can get a quality education in Russia. There are many contemporary public figures who were educated in Russia. However, at the same time, there is the perception that education in Russia is too unwieldy. Many unnecessary subjects are being taught in the schools and undergrad programs. While in Europe and America, specialists are being trained at the upper levels precisely in those disciplines that will prepare them for their future careers. And thanks to this, their specialists know their areas extremely well."

"I believe that no one gets a quality education in Chechen or Russian universities. The thing is that the teaching cadres leave something to be desired. There are few places left where good teachers remain. Beyond this, high school graduates often enter universities under the assumption that 'I better get a higher education regardless of what it's in.'"



MAIRBEK VATCHAGAEV

HOW WE WERE COUNTED

On the population numbers during the colonization of Chechnya (according to Russian data)

Data about the number of Chechens (and the North Caucasus' population in general) at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, is incomplete and should therefore be approached with caution. "All the numbers concerning the Caucasian population were arrived at approximately and, one can say, at a glance..., since, the way the highlanders saw it, counting people was pointless and even sinful: which is why they, when they could, resisted a national census or reported inaccuracies when resistance was impossible."

For example, Count Elmurza Cherkassky noted that in 1720, "there are a great number of Chechen peoples."



According to 1756–1757 data from the College of International Affairs, there were no more than 2,000 Chechens at that time. This data is most likely referring to the population in Chechen settlements located near Russian settlements on the Terek River.



In his report of November 7, 1791, General I. Gudovich indicates the number of Chechens to be "no more than five thousand"; however, the report allows us to conclude that he is speaking only of those who live on the banks of the Terek in the vicinity of Mozdok.

It is worth noting that the decades-long, ceaseless combat operations and epidemics introduced serious corrections to the demographic process. To this day, the legend that at the end of the 17th century, a plague killed half of the Chechen population, survives among the populace.

We must underscore that the main source for statistical-demographic data was the General Staff of the Special Caucasus Corps. Aside from it, another

source was information provided by travelers studying this region

Even the preliminary military department data about the number of armed Chechens allows us to estimate the adult male population.

General K. Knoring indicates in his report of January 16, 1800, that the Chechen peoples could field 10,000 armed men. If we assume that every family would send one armed person, then by taking into account average Chechen family size, we arrive at a number of approximately 60,000 people.

Special Caucasus Corps Commander Baron G. Rosen, the chief executive officer for civil and border affairs in the Caucasus, provides us with 1843 data. He estimates the Chechen popu-

lation at 200,000 people. This data was obtained by Capitan Nordenstamm between 1832 and 1834 during his survey of Chechnya. It served as the foundation of his work, *A Brief Military-Statistical Survey of Chechnya*. Basically, this is the first work of such rigor about Chechnya. The author performed a geographic survey of the country; described agriculture in detail; touched upon the origins of the Chechens, their history, and the spread of religion; conducted a comparative analysis of the Chechen language; accurately characterized the military action and the condition of the Chechen armed forces at the time; and — quite importantly — delineated their means of communication.

These numbers are corroborated by data provided in 1839 by A. Milyutin. By his calculations, the male population of Chechnya was from 100,000 to 150,000 people.

The 1842 figures are provided in a map of the Caucasus territory composed under the auspices of the General Staff of the Special Caucasus Corps. The map's author strove to relate the religious affiliations of the population to its ethnic composition. This was dictated by the military-political situation which ensued as a result of the North Caucasus' colonization. The map's scholar, D. Ismail-Zade, remarks as follows: "The possible breadth of the Shamil movement's religious base in the Caucasus — this was the consideration that, it seems, stood behind an interest toward the local populace's ethno-religious composition." Also curious is the classification of the population by its degree of obedience to the Russian state: "obedient," "semi-obedient," and "disobedient."

The German traveler, geographer, and naturalist, Moritz Wagner, traveled through the littoral regions of the Black Sea, the North Caucasus region,



Transcaucasia, and Persia. In Leipzig, in 1847, a two volume work was published on the basis of the materials he gathered during this expedition. According to Wagner's calculations, in 1843, there were 150,000 people of either gender in Chechnya.

We also have data from another traveler, the famous orientalist, I. Berezin. Between 1845 and 1846, he published material in the *Scholarly Notes of Kazan University*, which would in 1852 be published in a single volume, *Travels through Dagestan and Transcaucasia*. Berezin's calculations suggested a higher number at the beginning of the forties: 250,000 people of either gender.

On the subject of the Chechen population during active combat operations, we can assume that its decline was rather significant. According to A. Berzhe, during the war, Chechnya was a region that lost a vast majority of its population. A. Shakh-Girey points out that between 1847 and 1860, the Chechen population decreased more than twofold. Unfortunately, neither Berzhe nor Shakh-Girey mention where they got these numbers from.

In 1801, S. Bronevskiy provides a number of 30,000 steads. If we multiply the number of steads by the average family size (for Chechens this is six persons), we will come up with roughly 180,000 people of both genders.

The Chechen population in 1833, according to data from the Russian administration in the Caucasus, was 218,000 people. But this is a time of fierce struggle for the Chechen people

— i.e. a decade after the colonization of Chechnya began.

If we take Bronevskiy's figure as a base for calculating population growth, we can assume that, under favorable conditions, using Malthusian theory (in the 19th century, its results were accurate), the Chechen population would have doubled over fifty years — that is, if it were not for wars, epidemics, etc. Toward the end of the 1850s then — so, toward the end of the war with Russia — the population should have been, in the most conservative of estimates, 500,000 people of both genders. However, Berzhe confronts us with a different figure: toward 1858, the combined population of Chechen and Ingush communities, was only 120,000 people of both genders.

If we turn to modern demographic methods for our calculations, then the population of Chechnya at the end of the first half of the 19th century, should have been approximately 580,000 people.

Comparing this number with Berzhe's data, we obtain a difference of 460,000 people. Here, we must account not only for the number of casualties but also for those deceased from natural causes, as well as the absence of two generations' worth of progeny.

Even if we account for a percentage of error that is unavoidable in demographic calculations that deal with varying input data (which is contingent on the method of its calculation), then even in this case, the losses of the Chechen people during Russia's colonization of Chechnya, staggers the mind.

P.S. We do not touch upon the population of Chechnya in the modern period in this issue because this topic is worthy of separate research and a separate article. We will turn to it in one of the coming issues of this publication.



MAIRBEK VATCHAGAEV A BLAZE OF KINDNESS, EXTINGUISHED

It is difficult to write about Marie Bennigsen-Broxup in the past tense. For those who had the fortune to know her, she was truly a source of light. It seemed as though the entire sky was cast over with obscure smoke when, on October 10, 2012 (so recently!), the doctors issued a diagnosis that precluded any hope of recovery. But even then, it was hard to believe that the fateful end was at the doorstep — being in Marie's presence was a habitual joy which one had not the strength to part with. The hope that she would yet spend some time with us, contrary to everything, refused to die. But on December 7, 2012, at eight o'clock in the morning, the inevitable happened. Merciless destiny took Marie from everyone who loved and revered her.

Up to the very end, preserving her clarity of mind, Marie Bennigsen spent her last allotted days in extreme activity. She was trying to conclude her earthly business, say her farewells to everyone, finish writing what she had begun, prepare the magazine's publication... All this time, she was surrounded by a large, devoted family: her husband, Michael Broxup, her sons, Alexander and Julien, her sisters, Elizabeth and Fanny, her brother, Peter, and his wife, Nastya. Shaken by the news of the coming loss, acquaintances and relatives rushed to Oxford from all corners of the world, ardently wishing to find Marie still living. Some flew in from Australia, others from Turkey, Georgia, France...

Knowing and sensing that her hour was near, Marie endured the pangs of

*Speak not with sorrow
Of fellow travelers
Who in their sojourn
Vivified our day: they are no more.
Speak gratitude, for once they were.*

V. Zbukovsky

death stoically. She did not want people to feel sorry for her. She said that she had lived a captivating life rich with experiences and that — now that it was time to say farewell — it was not worth it to think of the bad but only to recall the very best and meaningful. It was uncanny, but Marie did not seem despondent! A born fighter, she offered us a vivid example of how one should conduct oneself on the verge of death.

Marie was born in Paris on July 29, 1944, into the family of Alexander Bennigsen (1913–1988), a famous French scholar of the East and the Soviet Union and a researcher of Muslim Asia. His books were not translated in the USSR, but students and the academic intelligentsia often referenced their arguments, gleaning them from *Radio Liberty* and *Voice of America*. The daughter's choice of profession reflected her father's influence. Having studied in the Sorbonne, Marie Bennigsen became an orientalist-politologist.

The East was more than a calling for Marie: it literally "infected" her. Her first independent research was focused on Iran and Afghanistan. Many of that region's politicians and public figures entered her circle of intimates. Later, already at the apex of her scholarly work, Countess Marie Bennigsen-Broxup became interested in the North Caucasus. Work on this topic became the focus of her interests, her

life's meaning. Her first research project focused on Sheikh Mansur (1765–1794), the military and religious-political leader of the mountain people in the Caucasian War of 1785–1791.

For almost a quarter of a century, Marie headed one of the most famous magazines of its time, dedicated to Central Asia — the *Central Asian Survey*. This publication not only provided the West with information about the region's republics, which were then part of the Soviet Union, but also printed articles about the Soviet Caucasus. From 1980 to 1990, Marie published a newsletter called the *Central Asia and Caucasus Chronicle*. She authored the monographs *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (1983, coauthored with A. Bennigsen) and *The North Caucasus Barrier* (1992). These books have not aged; they are studied to this day — a testament to how profoundly the scholar understood this region's problems.

Marie saw in the dissolution of the USSR a portent of a new stage of struggle, this time over the North Caucasus. Each visit to this region enriched her with a myriad impressions which ultimately helped her perceive in its entirety how necessary it was to raise the status of the North Caucasus. However, even for the Caucasians, every meeting with such a guest was an event. She found a common language easily, not only with politicians and the creative intelligentsia but with the common people as well. The problems of her friends became her problems; delving deeply into them, Marie always tried to help. Her large and friendly family came to terms with her constant self-sacrifice. Frequently, relatives and loved ones would join her projects to at least somewhat ease Marie's burden, to help her. Like a magnet, she attracted people, generously sharing with them both her enormous reserves of knowledge and the treasures of her soul.

Having begun her research with Chechnya, toward the end of her life, Marie Bennigsen was helping the large Chechen diaspora in Europe. Many turned to her for support, knowing that she would not refuse. Sometimes these people only knew her name and could not pronounce her last name, but they tried to meet with Marie, hoping for help from this extraordinary woman who was famous for her magnanimity and selflessness.

Among my personal recollections of her, probably the most vivid impression was due to the following episode. Arriving in Chechnya on March 10, 1996, we found ourselves trapped between RF MVD and MOD detachments in Grozny (coming from the Staropromyslovsky District). Marie was with us. We were concerned for her and she for us. Sparring with a major at a checkpoint, we were expecting them to take us away to the Khankala base at any moment. This was, without exaggeration, a mortal peril. Suddenly, Marie hotly declared outright that what was happening in Chechnya was a crime. We instantly understood just how dangerous her fervor was for her and all of us, but we could not stop her. In her impetuosity, Marie went to the point of demanding that she be put in touch with MVD Minister Kulikov. And here, out of nowhere, the major who was the executive officer at the checkpoint, asked whether she was in any way related to General Bennigsen. Marie was very surprised: was it possible that in the Russian Army someone would still remember the reign of Alexander I? The major proudly affirmed that this was really the case. Instantly Marie declared that, in that case, he must assist us in our journey further into the mountains — she was, after all, the direct descendant of the famed general...

The fact of the matter was that our life hung by a thread. Approaching Grozny, we had not suspected that Chechen

fighters had been holding it for three days by then. Intending to blockade the enemy within the city boundaries, the Russian Army laid siege to it from all sides. The Russians had suffered heavy casualties, which pushed to its limits their hatred of the Chechens — and consequently of us, as well as of Marie whom we were escorting. But she remained triumphant: she did not ask, she demanded. This made an impression on the major who, captivated by her daring, smiled and ordered that Marie Bennigsen and the Chechens escorting her be granted passage. That day, her fearlessness rescued and perhaps saved us all...

Today, saying farewell to Marie, I wanted to relate this story. She wanted just this after all. It was her legacy: never to submit to despondency.

P.S. The DOSH staff were lucky and flattered by our acquaintance with Marie Bennigsen. We would even dare call it our friendship. Precisely a year ago, Marie came to visit us and went with us to Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia. She hoped to return again, and not for a last time...

Her passing is an irretrievable private loss, a great grief for every one of us.

Marie Aleksandrovna has left us, but the image of this extraordinary woman will continue to gravitate, like a lighthouse in stormy weather.

We grieve together with your relatives! We will always remember you and love you the way you were!

Thank you for everything!

Thousands of Caucasians, Tartars, and Russians — upon whom you bestowed your kindness — bow to you deeply!

Rest in peace!

A year without Marie Bennigsen-Broxup

