

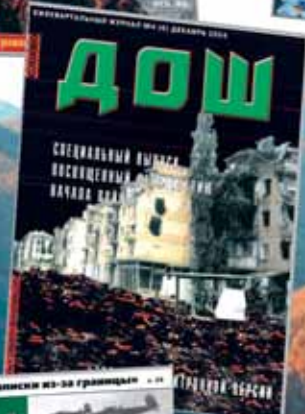
CHECHEN INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE

WORD

DOSH

DIGEST

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THE TRUE MIRROR OF THE LIFE IN CHECHNYA

DOSH - LOGOS - WORD - UNDERSTANDING - LAW

*My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.*

William Shakespeare

The *Dosh - Logos - Word* can weave and foster the *fabric* of time and the *Word* can set time *out of joint* and *set it back right*.

Dosh - Word is not a simple word: *Dosh* in Vainakh languages also means *Law*, similar to the Greek *Logos*, it creates a hierarchy of macro-cosm and through its multiple synthesis cobbles the steps of freedom.

The soul of a nation is its living language, the living speech of people. The language defines things both bitter and sweet. The language is both honey and poison.

The word gives birth to war and peace, brings delight and pleasure, and treats sorrow and grief.

The word keeps memories and creates histories. The Word is the immortality of the passed away generations.

It is man who takes pleasure and gives way to grief; who loves and hates. Man is the center of all great and all sacred on Earth. Man is the link between the two worlds. Man is the crossing of the orbits of the sky and the Earth, freedom and necessity.

When *time went out of joint*, God ordered man to *set it back right*.

Only that word is beautiful that is filled with spiritual energy.

The beauty of speech is not in its shine and ting but in the power of the word, in its affinity with the Everlasting Word.

The power of the word is manifested when the word gives pleasure and love, cultivates and multiplies the good.

The power of the word is in its strivings for the glory of the sacred truth.

Only this way the beauty that comes from the unity of the logic of the mind and the commands of the heart, the depth of wisdom, the purity of feelings and thoughts, and the perfection of moral freedom can be achieved.

And only then, the word can be leveled to a courageous act of civic consciousness.

Linguistically, *Dosh* acts as a synthesis of two basic verbs of Being and Act, namely: *Do* (the verb of Act) and *Du* (the verb of Being, the Essence) combined with *Sha* (the pronoun *Sha* means *Himself - Herself - Itself*).

Dosh (*Du - Sha - Do - Sha*) is the Logos of Thought that is creating itself both as Thought and as Being.

Therefore, *Dosh* represents the Logos of Being and the Logos of Becoming, the Logos of Truth and the Logos of Righteousness, and the Logos of Logos: *Dui*.

The Vainakh civilization managed to escape the extremes of religious fanaticism and myth creation. It also resisted the intellectual optimism of Socrates and the panlogism of Hegel because it managed to defend Freedom as Good Will.

The Vainakh civilization created its own ideal of life comprehension: *K'onahalla* (Man's Courage) and *Sisagalla* (Woman's Virtue) Codes of Personal Ethics.

The Vainakh tradition has preserved the codes of *K'onahalla* and *Sisagalla* as an ideal of civic consciousness and moral piety in *The Adat*, the Vainakh Code of Civil Conduct.

Dosh - Logos - Word - The Law of Being, Knowledge, and Act, is the fundamental basis of the spiritual activity of man.

Professor Salman VATSANAEV



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The publication of this Digest was made possible through a grant provided by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Moscow.

The war and political squabbles have cost many victims to the Chechen Republic. Human rights were trampled. People are separated. How to achieve peace and consent? If Chechnya and all of Russia aspire to build a legal democratic state, then the society needs a dialogue between the conflicting forces. In the meanwhile, it would be helpful to recollect the centuries-long common life; the friendly economic and cultural contacts among different ethnic and religious groups and individuals.

The main objective of our magazine is to provide a truthful and multifaceted account of what is happening nowadays in Chechnya and in the Northern Caucasus region, while uncompromisingly asserting the moral principles that do not tolerate lawless violence, extremism, and corruption no matter who it may concern or how it may be justified.

The historical and cultural magazine *DOSH* has been published quarterly in the Russian language since June, 2003. Over four and a half years it has become one of the most popular magazines in Chechnya.

The republic for a long time has been experiencing the need in independent mass media. *DOSH* today is the only magazine of the Chechen Republic that speaks from democratic positions and advocates the creation of civil society institutes and observance of human rights and human dignity. The magazine provides first-hand information from Chechnya through its reporters and analysts who work in its branch office in Grozny.

The magazine also covers the events outside the Chechen Republic, including the Caucasian diasporas in various regions of Russia, and regularly conducts sociological opinion polls. The magazine publications touch a great variety of topics, including history, literature, arts, science and education, sports and public health services in Chechnya. Articles by Russian and international experts, representatives of public and human rights organizations are published on a regular basis. *DOSH* publications spark vigorous interest not only among domestic readers but also in Europe. *DOSH* aspires to expand contacts among the Chechens who live in Chechnya, other regions of Russia, in the CIS countries, and far abroad. The editorial board shows special interest in maintaining and developing traditions of intercultural coexistence and cooperation and to all new that has been achieved in this area, and also considers it necessary to cover the international experience in resolution of ethnic and religious conflicts.

I would like to express special gratitude to Counsellor Bård Ivar Svendsen of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Moscow.

Israpil SHOVKHALOV
Editor-in-Chief



Dosh #1(1)2003
Stepan KASHURKO

THE NATIVE LAND WILL... NOT FORGET YOU!

The Story of Pilot Dasha Akaev
February 23rd: 59 Years since the Deportation
of the Vainakh People



On the eve of Red Army Day, February 22, 1944, Zana Akaeva from the village of Zakan-Jurt received a letter from her son who was fighting at the front.

"Mom, I am already Commander of an air assault regiment, have two medals. I participated in breaking the blockade of Leningrad: rescued its citizens from starvation. And now together with my comrades, we drive the German invaders away from the borders of our country. We revenge the fascists for the ruined cities and villages, for the cruelty and violence against the people. We have no time to rest, mom. Day and night we storm enemy positions, trains, ships, and airfields. You, mom, sleep easy, now you are far from the front and nobody will disturb your dream. Please know that I protect you, I am always with you. But if I am doomed to die, I shall die for the Native land like a hero. And the Native land will not forget you mom!"

Zana could not read and it was a Russian officer who read the letter to her. At the dawn of the following day, the very same Russian officer pushed the surprised and con-

fused mother of the hero out the native house with a butt of his machine gun.

First, all the inhabitants of Zakan-Jurt were driven to the collective-farm yard. All was happening as if in a dreadful dream. They were talking about someone's desertion and treachery. However, there were neither deserters, nor traitors among Zana's fellow-villagers...

Zana did not remember how the train reached Semipalatinsk: all the way she was suffering from fever. Feeling very upset because of separation from the native land the mother of the commander of a regiment, the Soviet pilot, decided to write a letter to Stalin. Weeks and months passed...

There was no answer.

"The native land will not forget" - the son promised to her. She believed him. And waited... And waited...

Dasha Ibragimovich Akaev was born on April, 5, 1910 in the village of Shalazhi, Urus-Martan region, into the family of Ibragim Akaev, a soldier of the legendary Wild Division. After the Soviet power established in the area, Ibragim moved to the neighboring Achhoj-Martan region, to the village of Zakan-Yurt. Dasha finished a boarding school in the neighboring Ermolovka and later graduated from a technical college in Rostov-on-Don.

While working as a mechanic at the Rostselmash plant, the young man at leisure actively attended the local aviation club. When in January 1931, at the IXth Congress of Komsomol, the slogan *"Komsomol members - aboard the plane!"* was proclaimed, Dasha was among the first who joined the city of Biisk incorporated school of civil aviation pilots. After a successful graduation from this school in 1933, he got an appointment with Transcaucasian Agricultural Aviation, which brought him closer to his home.

It was the time of celebration of technology and high speeds. Pilots reached all new heights and mastered long distance flights. Dasha also decided to perform a long distance flight. Once, while performing an agricultural flight, he intentionally changed the route, three times flew above his native village, and, to a great surprise of the alarmed fellow villagers, landed his plane near the edge of the village.

He was the first Chechen pilot and he well understood that during such moments the dreams that later become reality were born in the crazy heads of rural boys...

Dasha was punished for this brave flight, but, considering that he demonstrated courage having laid an air corridor through the Caucasian Ridge on the small plane, his commanders decided to ask the military registration and enlistment office to send him to a special pilot school in Odessa where he received his first military pilot certificate in 1934.

In the following year, Dasha became a pilot of naval aviation deployed in Yeysk on the coast of the Azov Sea. But the open spaces of the Azov Sea waters were too small for the true ace and he wrote a letter to those who, in his opinion, could understand it better than the Kremlin. Due to his letter to the well-known pilots Vodopianov and Gromov, Dasha was invited to Khabarovsk shortly where he became a pilot of the Amur Red Banner Military Flotilla aviation squadron and crew commander of MBR-2 seaplane (sea bombing scout). In May 1937, Dasha Akaev became member of the Communist Party and soon was promoted to head the local Komsomol organization.

Speaking the military language, the country was "on the march". The goals were set ahead and above and it seemed that a bright future was very close, behind the next turn...

In such a society, there could be no injustice. Such were the thoughts of a happy father whose wife Anna gave birth to their son in 1939. Anna knew English and Dasha could not miss the chance. He began to study the language with her help, just in the case of a war. Rumors of a nearing war could often be heard among the military. Akaev didn't like the position of the assistant military commissar since the very first days of his appointment. He never was a "room" pilot. In anticipation of a nearing war, Dasha taught younger pilots to make independent decisions in unforeseen extreme situations, such as an emergency landing, etc. He always was the first to show an example. When, under the pretext of shortage of fuel, he made an emergency landing outside the air field, he was subjected to a severe party trial. The protocol of the party commission session 83 dated May 20, 1940, reads: *"Case Summary: The Communist Party organization of air regiment 117 proclaims a strict reprimand and a warning to comrade Akaev for the emergency"*

landing without fuel outside of the air field, owing to infringement of orders and manuals, display of the lack of discipline, and excessive self-confidence.

Declared: To condemn D.Akaev's infringement, but, considering his sincere recognition of the offence expressed in deviation from flight orders and manuals that led to an emergency landing of the plane, to declare a reprimand.

Assistant to the secretary of the Party commission of the Amur Red Banner Military Flotilla, Senior Political Commissar Egorov. May 20th, 1940."

* * *

The Great Patriotic War began and senior lieutenant Akaev submitted an official report with the request to immediately send him to the front. However, the commandment of the Amur Red Banner Military Flotilla was not in a hurry to part with the skilled master of day time and night flights, sharp shooting and bombing. Akaev was appointed the assistant to the commander of air squadron 3 of the Amur Flotilla.

The enemy was approaching Moscow. Hitler's troops occupied Volokolamsk and were very close to the capital. Dasha Akaev insisted to be sent to the front but again his request got refused: the war in the Far East could also emerge any time. *"You are not a private soldier, you are the commander,"* - this was the explanation given to him. Akaev flared up: *"I agree to degrade. Send me to protect Moscow as a private soldier! The country is in danger and I sit out here, in deep rear, I go on the heads, I keep asking, and I am humiliated. Born to fly cannot creep!"*

Finally, the aviation commandment of the Amur Flotilla gave in. Akaev received the following certification:

"Deputy Commander of air fighter squadron 117 of the Amur Flotilla senior lieutenant Akaev is devoted to the cause of the party of Lenin-Stalin and the Socialist Native Land. He is disciplined, exacting to himself and his subordinates. He is able to bring up the fighting spirit in his staff. However, there were cases when, because of his principles, he carried out not what he had been ordered. There were displays of discontent when he demanded to be an ordinary pilot. Enjoys authority and is caring about his subordinates. Actively participates in social activities.

He flies confidently during the day, at night, under a cap, in clouds, and behind clouds. In 1941, he has a total flight record of 112 hours and 55 minutes. Of them: blind flights - 9 hours and 35 minutes, night flights - 39 hours and 47 minutes, high-altitude flights - 5 hours and 50 minutes, rout flights - 20 hours and 54 minutes, and in a projector - 1 hour and 50 minutes. He flies on planes MBR-2, U-2.

He is capable of neglecting personal

benefits for the benefit of service.

He is a strong-willed, resourceful, courageous, and resolute commander. He has grown in the military and political relation. As a weakness, he sometimes allows for unevenness in relation to the senior commanders; he is capricious, shows offence.

Conclusions: To appoint to the Field army for studying the experience of the Patriotic War. With this certification and conclusions agree. Commander of air regiment 117 Major Mukhin. Military Commissar of air regiment 117 Senior Political Commissar Sallo. January 24, 1942."

Senior Lieutenant Akaev didn't have the



time for *studying the experience*. On January 31, he arrived to the Air Forces of Red Banner Baltic Fleet and on February 2 started to perform flights. On the first day only, there were three flights.

During four days in February, Akaev performed 12 night flights on MBR-2 planes and was awarded the Red Star medal that was handed to him on August 15th the same year.

Each flight accomplished by Lieutenant Akaev was described in detail in special reports.

Akaev shared his experience not only with squadron 58 but also with many air divisions of the Baltic Fleet Air Forces. In the end of the year, Dasha was invited to a meeting of commanders and officers of the Baltic Fleet Air Forces to exchange the experience of bombing. Pilots were telling each other about their achievements. When Dasha's turn came he stood up and said: *"Give me the steering wheel of a high-speed bomber and then I'll share the fighting experience with pleasure!"* It was not only a courageous statement. It was a challenge!

The pilots supported their comrade and the command, having accepted his chal-

lenge, sent him to an aviation school for retraining on a fighter-bomber with the cruising speed of 200-410 km/h.

Having mastered the new machine, Captain Akaev received an appointment to the 35th assault air regiment of the 9th assault aviation division of the Baltic Fleet Air Forces.

The sky did not know such assault attacks on enemy positions: on trains, ships, and quays. He developed and successfully applied his attack maneuvers and willingly taught them to other pilots.

In September 1943, Akaev was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed the commander of the 35th assault air regiment. It was the time of preparation of our land, sea and air forces to break of enemy blockade of Leningrad.

The offensive operation of the Red Army near Leningrad, conceived in September 1943, was prepared carefully. The Soviet command decided to involve the armies of Leningrad, Volkhov and the 2nd Baltic fronts. The Baltic fleet, its air forces and aircraft of distant action were involved also.

The Leningrad front and the Baltic Sea air forces started the offensive on January 14th, 1944. The second assault army and the Baltic Fleet air forces stroke a powerful blow from Oranienbaum in the direction of Ropsha - a powerful enemy stronghold. The fascists resisted fiercely. The struggle for every strong point demanded huge efforts and self-sacrifice. During the first three days, our armies could penetrate only 8 to 10 km.

Fighter-bombers of Major Akaev showed miracles of bravery in breaking up the enemy's defense.

Newspaper Pravda wrote on January 18, 1944: *"Fighter-bombers of major Akaev, despite of low overcast and bad visibility, approached the target and precisely hit it.*

Major Akaev was the first in the air. To secure the success of the operation, he first attacked the anti-aircraft guns of the enemy. He destroyed four anti-aircraft automatic weapons, then has burnt a tank, blew up an armored vehicle, and then a dugout with soldiers and officers..."

In the morning on January 19 our armies took Ropsha. To honor the troops that participated in taking Ropsha, that day Moscow saluted with 20 shots from 224 guns and the 9th assault division, where Akaev served, was given the name of Ropsha.

For brilliant performance of fighting tasks Major Akaev was awarded the medal of Alexander Nevsky, and newspaper *Baltic Pilot* wrote on February 12, 1944: *"Example Commander. Major Dasha Akaev in Fight.*

We often read in newspapers about the front air field how pilots of Akaev's unit destroyed... followed by the numbers of destroyed live force and technical equipment of the enemy.

From the first day of our offensive near

Leningrad the pilots of this unit actively cooperated with ground troops. And commander major Dasha Ibragimovich Akaev was always with his pilots. You can find him at home (so he names his dugout) only late at night. Tall, of dense constitution, with dark oriental type of face, Dasha Ibragimovich very avariciously tells about himself and is more eager to speak about his pilots. However, it is typical of other officers of the unit. Such are our pilots. They see heroic feats of their comrades, admire them, but are reluctant to talk about their own battles.

Major Akaev is also like this. He is modest and, as a truly modest soldier, is brave and persevering in fight.

On January 14, punching fogs and clouds, he took off for the area of Ropsha to attack the front line of German defense. He performed six attacks and destroyed a German tank, an armored vehicle, and about twenty soldiers and officers.

The commander flew almost every day, sometimes alone, sometimes leading six or seven planes. And when Akaev was leading the fighters in the air, the pilots knew - they will reach the target and strike it for sure.

Once during an assault, Akaev's plane was shot down by an anti-aircraft shell. Splinters punched the plane body and the fuel tank. Major Akaev, however, continued steering the broken plane to the target, dumped the bombs and fired from his guns and machine guns. The other pilots did the same. The group destroyed over a hundred soldiers, five motor vehicles, one artillery battery, and one self-propelled gun.

Major Akaev performed many such bombing attacks.

Either during a snow or in a fog, either in cloudy or in clear weather, he flies with a desire or even with pleasure. Undoubtedly, in Akaev, a Chechen by nationality, and in the people of his unit, as if in a drop of water, the force of our multinational Union is reflected, the country whose citizens and soldiers, different in nationality but identical in their love to the Native land, beat the enemy with persistence, exasperation, and skill.

Vladislav Krotevich, a Belorussian, the pilot of Akaev's unit, threw his burning plane on an enemy vessel. He blew up himself but also blew up the ship. His feat was repeated by Isaak Irzhak, a Jew, who collapsed his burning plane on a congestion of enemy live force and cars. Shkoda, a Ukrainian, died fighting till the last cartridge. Pilots Golikov, Naumov, Maksuta, Prokudin, Yevstigneyev, and many others - Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Georgians - bravely continue the war.

It tells a lot about our people. People from different ends of our immense country - from the steppes of Ukraine and from the mountains of Checheno-Ingushetiya, from

the woods of Belarus and from the factories of Moscow - came to defend Leningrad."

Akaev liked IL-2 fighter for its speed and invulnerability. The Germans were very afraid of ILs, called them *Schwarze Tod* (black death) or tanks with wings. Many times Akaev's plane was shot down and he managed to come back to the home air field or performed an emergency landing literally on the word of honor and on one wing. This is where the experience that he had got in the pre-war years, contrary to all orders and manuals, turned out to be useful!

Akaev's high flying skill, his fearlessness and resoluteness in fight were well-known to the Nazis. In the sky, they immediately recognized him by his style and called him *the Russian ace*.

Long time ago, he learned one truth: no matter how cautious the pilot was in a fight, he cannot escape his fate. Moreover, when you quail, you die earlier. Dasha took for a rule to overcome the enemy by the strength of mind.

"Let the death be afraid of me, rather than I be afraid of her!" - He decided during one of his first flights and followed this rule steadily.

But one enemy point still remained impregnable...

* * *

In the battle for Leningrad, the ominous role was played by a German air field near the Estonian city of Rakvere. Heavy German bombers Heinkel-111 that caused heavy losses to our armies were based here. They flew only accompanied by the newest fighters Focke-Wulf FW-190.

The air field was built with the purpose to destroy Leningrad and in the case of breaking the blockade of the city it should have become some kind of an *air lock* on the way of our troops to the West. So, our aircraft needed to cut a window to Europe in the air.

To say that the approaches to the air field



in Rakvere were reliably secured is the same as to say nothing. The air field was unapproachable both from the air and from the ground - because of the Gulf of Finland. A continuous field of obstacles with disguised anti-aircraft batteries. It was known that all of them from time to time were relocated to new places leaving wooden or plywood models of fighters in former places. It was often done in the direction of the Gulf of Finland in order to confuse our reconnaissance.

Our planes were flying above the gulf on reconnaissance mission and with the purpose to cause fire from the secret points. However, the Germans responded seldom and very soon both sides even got used to each other and our planes flew without causing any special interest.

Dasha quite often thought that the existence of this air field offended him. "They behave as if there are no men left here!" - he told friends. Once he even saw Heinkels from a close distance at a high altitude when he was coming back after a reconnaissance flight, accompanied by several Focke Wulfs. "Commander!" - Dasha heard in the headphones the excited voice of a pilot who recently joined the unit - "Shall we shoot a couple Heinkels!" - "No!" - he responded quickly. They had the order not to get involved in fight during their watch above the gulf.

That day Dasha solved the puzzle. To bomb Rakvere, it was necessary to fly up from the gulf, the shortest way to air field.

The fascists almost got used to our planes above the gulf and did not get involved in fight. Dasha decided to take advantage of it. The success depended on absolutely different and loosely connected factors: wind direction and speed, flight altitude and the corner of a dive, the exit from attack, and taking the planes away from the blast wave... Suddenness was presumed to win only 10-15 minutes. After that the wall of wire would so dense that many would be lost, but bombs would reach the target...

The commander spent a lot of time over this puzzle but possible big losses stopped him.

And then came the day of February 25, 1944. When he returned from a successfully completed flight, his friends noticed a dramatic change in their commander. He was deeply depressed by something; turned dark, became isolated, and looked around estranged and indifferent. Something has shaken this extraordinary strong and courageous person.

This secret was revealed to many only in the beginning of March when it was officially announced on the radio and in all newspapers about the deportation of all the Chechen and Ingush people to Kazakhstan. Akaev learned about this monstrous action two days after the tragedy. While returning from a distant flight, Dasha heard on his portable radio set the news of an English-speaking radio station about the universal eviction of the Chechens and the Ingush as enemies of the people.

Dasha could not remember how he got to his dugout and fell down without removing his high fur boots. Being smart and judicious, he understood that it was senseless to appeal to the government... All night long this man, shaped of steel and not afraid of death, groaned heavily and for the first time in his life cried...

It was the hardest blow in his life since his father died.

While living in the Far East, he heard that the Koreans were move to internal areas of the country. It was explained by the necessity in the case of war with militaristic Japan. It was impossible to expect how the Koreans would react. It was safer both for them and for the country to move them to internal areas. At least, this was the explanation for the deportation of the Koreans. Such explanations were not applicable to the people of Checheno-Ingushetiya in any way. The front line was already very far away and the Chechens, as he heard, were desperately beating the enemy. The political commissar of the division once gave him a leaflet about the feat of Khanpashi Nuradilov, a young Chechen machine gunner who killed 920 fascists in 1941.

What caused this deportation? Cooperation with the fascists could not be possible since the enemy did not even reach Checheno-Ingushetiya and bombed Grozny only from a far distance. Till now, it was his only consolation that calmed down his alarm about the destiny of his relatives. Now his head was spinning...

He could not find the answer to the painful questions that were spinning in his head. There was something humiliating in this absurdity, that his people was removed by the army for which he, Dasha Akaev, was ready to give his life any minute.

If mistrust was the reason for the eviction of the Chechens, then had he the right to give

orders to his assault air regiment? In fact, people trust him their lives!

In great excitement he jumped from his trestle bed choking in a small dugout, then again buried his face in the pillow, trying to constrain a cry coming from his heart. He was shocked. What for? What for? What will now become of him? What to undertake?

Mother, where are you? How are you? What can I do for you? These questions were drilling his brain. Suddenly his father came to his aid, just like in childhood. Dasha recollected how his father always used to say to him when seeing him off on a long journey: *"Son, whatever may happen to you, whatever grief may fall upon you, remember that there is no place either on the ground or in the sky where there is no Allah. He will send you only what you can bear. Hope for Him and He will not leave you. Keep the name of the Chechen."*

"How could I forget?" Dasha regained consciousness. *"The main thing is not to panic!"* He gave the order to himself. *"Being here, I protect the Native land, so I protect my people, my native soil. I have no other right whatever happened to you, mom."*

The terrible reality gave courage to him. He knew now what to do.

Having issued the order to drawing a bombing attack on air field in the vicinity of the city of Rakvere, Dasha wrote a short note to his wife and son. (During the war, it was not authorized to write letters at certain periods even to relatives, especially in the units of increased secrecy.)

He came out to his comrades, as always, collected and tightened. He precisely and clearly explained the task and added: *"Guys, it is not the first time that we fly, and it is seldom that we come back without losses. This attack will be the most difficult. Therefore, whoever has doubts may not fly. We have*

spare crews..." His comrades didn't let him finish his speech. All of them stepped forward. Navigator Trokhachev said: *"Commander, no need for words. Lead us into the fight."*

"Good luck," - responded the commander.

* * *

The commander of the 35th assault aviation regiment Major Akaev appointed five crews for the flight. Since the task was very serious, it was decided to take navigators and one technician instead of shooters. The commander was the leader of the group. The duties of the shooter were carried out by the navigator of the regiment Captain Alexander Frolovich Trokhachev. The second crew was made of deputy commander of the regiment, also commander of the 1st squadron Major Grigory Filippovich Reutov and navigator of the squadron Lieutenant Michael Semenovich Onufrienko. The third crew consisted of Lieutenant Konstantin Nikolaevich Golikov and navigator Junior Lieutenant Alexey Fedorovich Logvinov. The fourth crew was made of the pilot of the 2nd squadron Junior Lieutenant Vladimir Semenovich Davitashvili and navigator of this squadron Lieutenant Alexander Timofeevich Shutko. The fifth crew consisted of the pilot of the 2nd squadron Junior Lieutenant Nikolay Gavrilovich Nikulin and technician of the same squadron Junior Lieutenant Michael Ivanovich Novoselov.

The task had a precise plan: to attack the target from the Gulf of Finland from a single pass by heading of 160 degrees. The same heading was set for leaving the target. Weather conditions: overcast of 6-7 points. Altitude of 500 meters. Quickly to attack, suddenly coming down from the clouds and, having left the pique, continue on a low-level flight.

At 17:00, five mighty ILs lead by Akaev took off up in the sky from the air field in Kaporye and headed towards the target. Eight


**ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ
ВОЕННО-МОРСКОЙ
АРХИВ**

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РУКОВОДИТЕЛЮ ПОИСКОВОГО ЦЕНТРА "ПОИВМ"
МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО СОЮЗА ВЕТЕРАНОВ ВООРУЖЕН-
НЫХ СИЛ Кашурко Степану Савельевичу.

г. Москва, ул. Блотская, д. 29,
кв. 296


АРХИВНАЯ СПРАВКА

В книге учета потерь личного состава
35 Таллинского Краснознаменного штурмового
авиационного полка ВВС Краснознаменного Бал-
тийского флота за период 1943-1945 г. значится
командир полка майор АКАЕВ Даша Юристович .
26 февраля 1944 года вылетел на бомбоштурмовой
удар по аэродрому Ракевере и с боевого задания
не вернулся: был сбит в бою над аэродромом.

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**ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ
ОТДЕЛ КРАСНОЙ ЗВЕЗДЫ
АРХИВ**

РУКОВОДИТЕЛЮ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО
ПОИСКОВОГО ЦЕНТРА "ПОИВМ" МС СССР

товарищу КАШУРКО С.С.

125413 г. Москва, ул. Блотская, 29

По Вашему поручению в Центральном архиве Министерства
обороны проверены архивные документы с целью уточнения судь-
бы майора АКАЕВА Даша (Даниила) Ибрагимовича. По данным уче-
та офицерского состава, имеющегося в архиве, установлено,
что

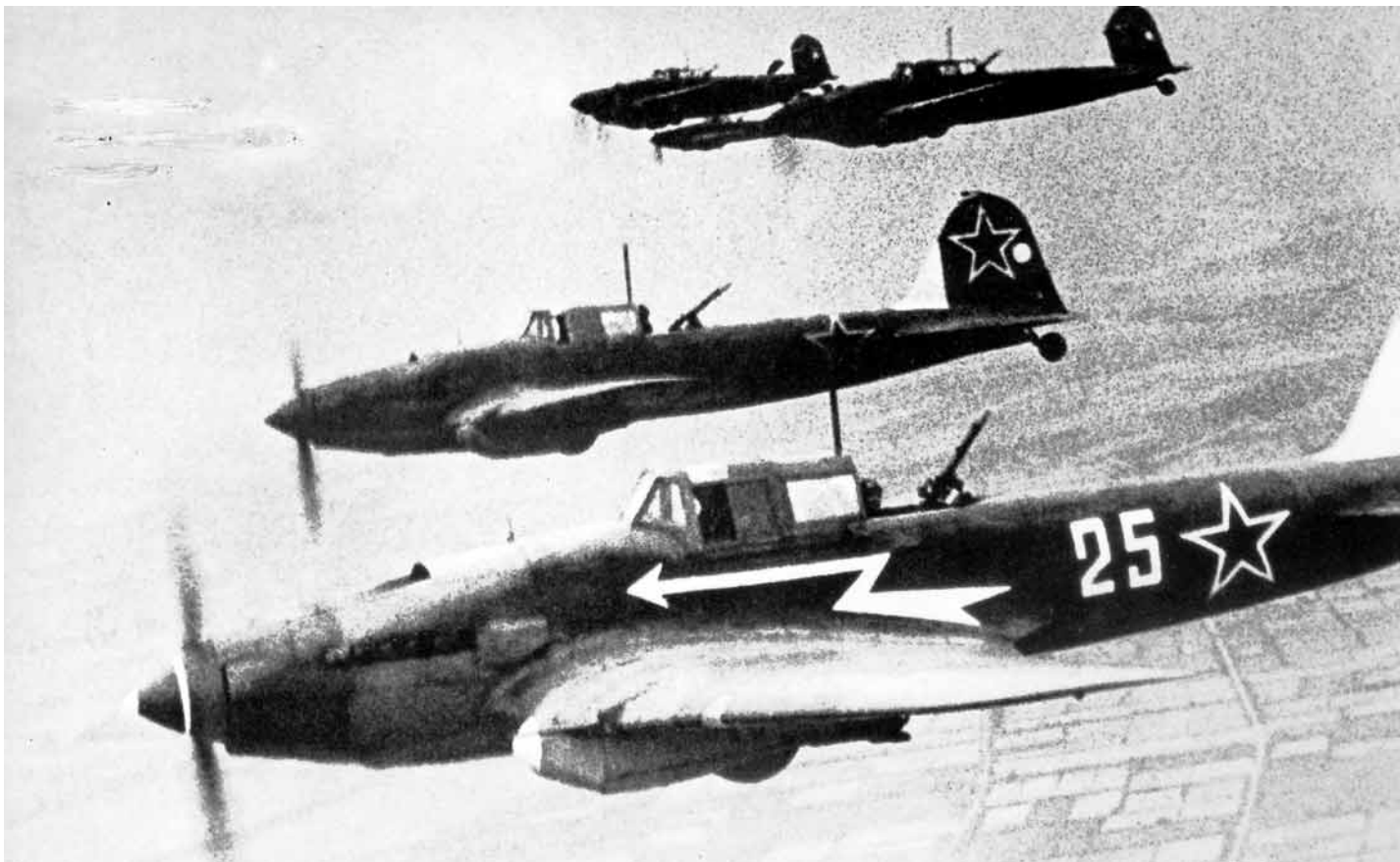
АКАЕВ Даниил (так в документе) Ибрагимович, год рождения
не указан, до войны проходил службу конструктором-пилотом
8-го штурмового полка (приказ Главкома ВВС от 16.12.1934
года № 0181), затем военным пилотом 10 морской дальнеба-
завательной авиационной группы (приказ от 17.03.1935г.)
в звании "старшина".
Приказом НКО от 15.02.1937 г. № 0145 назначен младшим летчи-
ком 10-й морской ДР авиаскадрильи и присвоено воинское
звание "лейтенант".
В звании "майор" проходил службу командиром 35-го штурмово-
го авиационного полка ВВС Краснознаменного Балтийского фло-
та. Погиб 26 февраля 1944 года - не вернулся с боевого за-
дания. Место гибели не указано.

Основание: ЦАМО, картотека учета о/с.

Уточнить место гибели майора АКАЕВА Д.И. по документам
35-го шп не представляется возможным, т.к. Центральный архив МО
документы военно-морских частей не хранит.

Рекомендуем обратиться в Центральный Военно-Морской архив
(188350 г. Гатчина Ленинградской области).

ЗАМЕСТИТЕЛЬ НАЧАЛЬНИКА ОТДЕЛА
И. ЗЕКИН



Yak-9 fighters from the 12th reconnaissance regiment accompanied the five bombers.

At 17:40, they were precisely above the target. Fascist antiaircraft guns immediately started the fire and Focke-Wulfs were up in the air. The accompanying Yak-9 fighters got involved into the fight above the clouds while the ILs started the bombing attack.

The impact on the air field was stunning and powerful. That was a severe and ruthless fight. Explosions of unprecedented force shook the ground. Blast waves could reach the ILs. Some of them were pierced by shells and scattered in the air. Both parties equally suffered from antiaircraft shells.

It seemed that the sky became tight. The planes caught fire when shot down or ramming each other, dragging a tail of black loop of smoke.

And there, below, all was burning... blazing... shaking...

The air field seized to exist - it was a continuous storming flame.

The impregnable fascist air field of strategic importance was wiped out.

The fire of antiaircraft guns and the Focke-Wulfs destroyed all ILs.

The plane of the commander caught fire and fell down near the air field.

Only two pilots survived by miracle - major Reutov and Junior Lieutenant Davitashvili. They were taken prisoner and were freed in 1945.

Eight heroes of the attack perished bravely but remained forgotten by their Native

land. The gold star of the Hero of the Soviet Union was not cast for the legendary commander Major Akaev.

He was posthumously presented to this high rank but his name was taken off the list because he was a Chechen, a representative of the deported people. The feat of the commander and everyone who died together with him, having provided the victorious offensive of the Soviet Army to Berlin, was forgotten. The nationality of Dasha Akaev turned out fatal not only for him but also for everyone who without hesitation followed their commander into the fire:

Captain Alexander TROKHACHEV

Lieutenant Konstantin GOLIKOV

Junior Lieutenant Alexey LOGVINOV

Junior Lieutenant Nikolay NIKULIN

Junior Lieutenant Michael NOVOSELOV

Lieutenant Michael ONUFRIENKO

Lieutenant Alexander SHUTKO

Eternal memory to the heroes!

THE BLOODY GLOW OF KHAIBAKH

The whole world knows about the fanatic burning by the SS troops on March 22, 1943, in the Belarus village of Khatyn of 149 inhabitants, the youngest of whom was only seven weeks old.

But very few people know about an even more monstrous crime carefully hidden by the authorities which was accomplished a year later, on February 27, 1944, in a high-mountainous Chechen village of Khaibakh where Stalin executioners burned 705 inhabitants alive, the youngest of whom was only one day old.

The story of the ferocious genocide in Khaibakh became known to me when I was traveling the former front roads of the Great Patriotic War. And, probably, the God assigned this duty to me - to be the first to document this brutal crime of the XXth century and to tell about it to all mankind so that such things could never be repeated anywhere. And I am rather grateful to the Lord for this trust.

So, listen, people, to this confession of mine, sad and mournful. Learn what paths and reasons brought me to this unfortunate Khaibakh where, together with the eyewitnesses, relatives and friends of the victims, I heard, saw, and passed through my heart the unprecedented tragedy of innocent and defenseless people.

Listen to this terrible confession that comes from the depth of my soul to you, readers, and going to the bottomless depth of the heavenly empire, to the Creator, so that the entire Universe could learn about those sufferers who accepted martyr death from the homebrew executioners.

Listen with your heart to the pained confession that for 13 years I patiently concealed in myself in hope of the arrival of the reasonable end to the phantom of Stalinist-Berian politics, the barbarous politics which spirit still soars above the distressful Chechen Republic that continues bleeding profusely even nowadays.

When will all this end?

FOLLOWING THE STEPS

OF GENERAL ROKOSSOVSKY'S SCOUT

During my search along the former war roads, I met with everything, both heroic and tragic. But that I encountered in Ukraine, in the ancient city of Novgorod-Seversky, I saw for the first time.

On the slope of the Desna River that fell because of high spring waters, I could see skeletons of saddled horses and the remains of their owners - cavalymen in Caucasian clothes with sabers. How shocking! As it turned out, they were scouts of the 2nd Caucasian Cavalry Guards Corps who heroically died in combat against superior forces of the Nazis on March 12, 1943, while carrying out in the enemy rear a special task of general Rokossovsky who was Commander-in-Chief of the Central front.

I carefully examined the remains of one of the heroes and found a medallion (the so called mortal medallion), a photograph, a cutting from the army newspaper *Vpered*, an undispatched letter to mother Zana in Khaibakh, and a leaflet calling the Germans to surrender. I came across this female name, so rare among the Chechen women, another time: the mother of Dasha Akaev was also called Zana!

This finding was packed in a waterproof medical package that belonged to the commander of the cavalry reconnaissance platoon of the 3rd Cavalry Guards division of the

2nd Caucasian Cavalry Guards Corps sergeant major Beksultan Gazimakhmovich Gazoev.

The medallion and the undispatched letter contained the address: Chechen-Ingush ASSR, Galanchozhsky district, settlement Khaibakh of Nachkhoi Village Soviet.

With greater excitement I started reading an article *Caucasian Knights* from the army newspaper *Vpered*. It had a subtitle: "Valiant Slashers Father and Son Gazoev. Their Sabers Are Sharp and Their Horses Are Fast." Here is what was told in the article:

"The Great Patriotic War brought together in one regiment two Chechens - father Gazimakhm and son Beksultan Gazoev from a high-mountainous village of Khaibakh where happy cattlemen live on green Alpine meadows growing white fine-wool sheep, and above them sharp-sighted eagles and plumose clouds soar in the blue sky. The father voluntary arrived to the front to join his son with homebrew racers called Argun and Khaibakh."

Like two drops of radiant Caucasian wine, the father and the son are similar in everything. Tall, beautiful, strong, dexterous, and kind. Both are junior sergeants. Merry fellows and brave slashers. Each slashed over two dozens and wounded several dozens of fascists. Their mottos are Our Sabers Are Sharp and Our Horses Are Fast and For the Native Land, for Comrade Stalin!

Each of them proudly displays on the breast the medal For Courage and the Red Star medal solemnly awarded to them on the Red Army Day. On this holiday, the grateful sons of the Caucasus arranged a wonderful and cheerful improvised concert to the regiment. In the difficult conditions of the war, each of us received a drink of happiness, of joyful house mood.

Lit up with smiles, the soldiers looked at valiant mountaineers, the father and son Gazoev with kind envy and admiration. They showed high class stunts on the horseback of their hot trotters skipping in all pace. Then each of them easily lifted on the shoulders their horses with full combat equipment, saying jokingly: Now let our horses ride on us.

At the end of this unforgettable concert, the father and the son, dexterously having pulled out their sparkling sabers, with their traditional clothes opened wide, just like the wings of mountain eagles, burst in the flashing Caucasian Lezginka dance. All the soldiers and commanders stepped to the music and clapped hands shouting Ossa, Ossa! Good fellows, those Chechens! Long years to you and high combat awards!

Correspondent, captain A.Pevtsov."

And the letter to his mother, Zana Gazoeva, was terribly grieving:

"Dear mommy, dear brothers Uvajs, Umar, Yasu, Musa, little sisters Mari, Sari, Sana, Minat, and Aibikal! Be strong to accept a sad message from the front. There is no more our dear father, our supporter. I blame myself. I couldn't protect him, and therefore my heart is torn to parts. My hair turned grey from grief. How will you live now!? You are still small. Who will bring you up? Had it not been for the war, I would replace the father. And now who knows? Above my head are German aircraft and ahead are their deadly tanks. But there's nothing



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Stepan KASHURKO

else to be done. It is necessary to protect the Native land, to expel the defile Germans from the Russian soil. Our division commander presented me with one more award - the Red Banner medal. The same medal was posthumously awarded to the father. Under the order of general Rokossovsky, his awards and the horse Khaibakh will be sent to you. You will be called for delivery. Dear mom, when you go to the military registration and enlistment office, take the monetary certificate with you. A pension for children will be granted till their maturity. If Allah leaves me alive, I shall come back home with Argun. He, just like me, was wounded two times. We are inseparable. Together in combat, together in fire, together in water. And if it is fated - together in the tomb. Together - for the Native land! For our Stalin!

Mommy! Gain strength, calm down, as you can, do not tear your gentle heart. It is now one for all of us. Do not cry, do not worry about us children. The state will help. Our dear leader Stalin will help!

We lost the father in a heavy fight on approaches to the Desna River on the Female holiday of March 8th. Above his tomb, the division commander said: We lost a hero! Everybody cried. I could not restrain either. I cried like in childhood.

When we banish the wicked enemy, then I shall put on a huge tombstone above the father's grave, such as the one above the grandfather's grave in Khaibakh, and shall write with gold letters: Sleep easy, dear father! I am eternally indebted to you. Your senior son Beksultan.

My dear beloved mommy, Uvajs, Umar, Yasu, Musa, Mari, Sari, Sana, Minat, and Aibika! I have neither forces nor time to write any more. I hear the signal To combat! Argun knows this signal. He is beating his hoof. He is calling for me. I shall send the letter after the fight. Farewell! Farewell! I Embrace and kiss you, your loving Beksultan.

March 12, 1943. Ukraine. The Desna River."

HOW THE WHOLE VILLAGE DISAPPEARED

As always during the search, I hurried to inform his native land about the discovered hero. So that this message could draw attention of post office workers and get quicker to the addressee, the letter was sent open with a stamp High Importance. The hero found.

"Dear Zana Gazeval! I could touch the ashes of your son Beksultan and the light memory of your husband Gazimahma who both heroically perished in March, 1943 in Ukraine. You probably already know about it through the notices from the Ministry of Defense or from the military registration and enlistment office. I have a photograph and a document of Beksultan. Please

respond. I will provide the details during a meeting.

Moscow, 4 Gogolevsky Boulevard, S.S.Kashurko."

The answer from Grozny came immediately with a stamp of the address bureau: "Settlement Khaibakh in Chechen-Ingush ASSR does not exist."

It is impossible! I once again carefully



study the documents and the undischarged letter...

I immediately took off for the Chechen Republic. In fact, there were cases when careless insensible post office workers were lazy to deliver letters to remote farms or villages and were sending formal replies: "It does not exist. It is not listed. It is not known," etc. Whereas when you visit yourself the native land of the hero, you find the hero's relatives and neighbors.

In Grozny, Doku Gapurovich Zavgaev, the first secretary of Communist Party Regional Committee met me extremely suspiciously:

"Right. There is no Khaibakh in the republic. Neither in directories, nor on maps. What's the use of that Khaibakh to you? Well, it existed before the war. And it seized to exist during the war. It was burned down..."

"And the people, where are the villagers? Where is the mother of the hero, where are his brothers and sisters?"

Doku Gapurovich gasped and sighed one way or another trying to evade from the answer, then he unwillingly squeezed out:

"And people were burnt. During the deportation they were burnt. Well, why should we stir the old stuff? What happened is buried under the grass."

"There was the mother of the hero, it is necessary to inform..."

"To whom? To ashes?" - He attempted a joke.

"Yes, to ashes! Give me a helicopter, I will fly there. How can it be - they were burnt?!" - I was indignant. The father and the son gave their lives for the Native land, and their relatives were burnt! Not even near to the front but two thousand kilometers away from the front!

"Cool down," - the head of the party regional committee responded calmly. - "All was done under the Decree of the Supreme Commander, Stalin. It is forbidden to speak or write about this fact. Is it clear?"

But I did not recede. I was appealing to his conscience. I insisted and Zavgaev surrendered:

"I'll give you a helicopter. Fly anywhere you like, even to... hell!"

The helicopter was given to me. A low-power one. The pilots said that turbulence was high in the mountains above former Khaibakh and it would be difficult to keep the helicopter steady, it might hit against a rock and everyone could really depart to hell just like Zavgaev had said. Then you will also become missing in action, - they warned.

To get necessary permissions and study the archival documents related to the tragedy in Khaibakh, I had to return to Moscow. The documents of the special commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU headed by V.S.Tikunov, deputy manager of the department of administrative bodies of the Central Committee, were in the single copy and were kept under a thousand locks by V.I.Boldin, head of the general department of the Central Committee. I had to personally ask Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev. He gave permission. Thanks a lot to him.

Having learnt a lot of very important classified information, I took off to Grozny. The news about my firm intention to get involved into the Khaibakh case flew around the republic momentarily. There were many people and reporters from of radio and TV waiting for me at the hotel. All begged me not to recede: "We shall carry you on hands to Khaibakh!" As it turned out, all the roads and tracks were destroyed (blown up) back then, in 1944, so that there could be no access to the prohibited zone.

Realizing such an unusual turn of affairs, the Chairman of the Chechen-Ingush Council of Ministers Sergey Mazhitovich Bekov, an Ingush, suggested creating an extraordinary commission to investigate the genocide in Khaibakh. The following people voluntarily joined the commission: the eyewitness of burning the people in Khaibakh, at that time former assistant to the People's commissar of Justice of the republic Dzijaudin Malsagov, prosecutor of Urus-Martan region, member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR Ruslan Tsakaev, member of the organizing committee on restoration of Ingush autonomy Salam Alkhigov, and a history school teacher from the village of Gekhi-Chu Salamat Gaev. I was unanimously

elected Chairman of the commission.

On August 22, 1990, a powerful MI-8 helicopter given to us by the government of Kabardino-Balkariya soared up above Grozny and headed to Khaibakh, to the altitude of 2,100 meters above the sea level.

Having clung to a window, I noticed a lot of men climbing up mountains slopes in a chain, like ants. As I was told, they were climbing up the mountains the second day. Such mass ascension to a high-mountainous plateau was attempted for the first time, - said Tsakaev.

Admiring the fantastic beauty of the virgin nature, someone exclaimed: *"Look, it is paradise on Earth!"* - *"And there, above is a hell for humans,"* - uttered Malsagov in gloomy silence.

"Right ahead is a patrimonial Tower. It is Khaibakh!" - The pilot announced.

"It is not Khaibakh, it is the empire of the dead," - Malsagov corrected sadly.

Making circles above this silent empire, the helicopter, at Malsagov's persistent request, hang above a black spot with sticking out burnt columns of a former stable of the collective farm named after Lavrenty Beria, right where there in February, 1944 a wild atrocity was committed to the peaceful population of this silent high-mountainous village. I stared into this black spot. Terrible impulses proceeded from it. I looked at the lonely tower that was standing there alone like a watchman, this mute witness to burning more than seven hundred inhabitants of the ancient Khaibakh.

Having made a maneuver above the plateau densely clamped by rocks, the helicopter smoothly landed near the Gekhinka River that was murmuring among grass and flowers in melancholy.

I SAW SOBING MOUNTAINEERS

I couldn't resist constraining a sincere impulse any more and I rushed after Malsagov. Having made a few steps on the waving black ashes I felt that my feet got thoroughly stuck in deadly breathing bog of human bones covered by ashes from the burned down straw roof.

It was scary. Terrifying. I tried to turn back but something tenaciously held my right foot like a trap. In horror I have pulled it out with force. It appeared, it got stuck in the thorax of a scorched person. Shaken, not noticing people approaching to me, I raked with hands a thin layer of ashes and saw a female skeleton with a magnificent plait that escaped fire only because she fell over it, covered by the body. *"It is my wife!"* - I heard a convulsive cry. A gray-haired old man Yerokhan Satuev could constrain tears holding at his heart the magnificent plait of his wife with shivering hands: *"Aminat! At last we met."*

Having receded back from this terrifying hell, Dzijaudin Malsagov, overwhelmed with emotions, began to tell to the shaken moun-



taineers what he had to go through in this place 46 years ago, when he, being assistant to the people's commissar of Justice, was sent help NKGB to deport the Chechens to Kazakhstan and became an involuntary witness of this barbarous genocide. Then Salamat Gaev brought up the accusatory facts about this punitive action that he had been collecting over many years. There was no end to memoirs. They spoke about the children, mothers and wives, fathers and grandfathers who were burned here alive. While listening to them I felt how anger and blood boiled in my heart. And shame. A great shame. I refused to believe that such a horror was accomplished in our socialist state that boasted of being the most humane and free! Having passed all the circles of hell, the heart-broken old Chechens found forces to tell about the villainy that occurred to their relatives.

I decided to tell to you, dear readers, about everything what I saw, heard, and read during the investigation those days. I will tell the truth frankly and without fear to be pursued by those who did not want and do not want exposure of their villainy and their cannibalism.

WEREWOLFS IN REGULAR ARMY DISGUISE

Early in the morning of February 23, 1944, on the day of Red Army celebrations, all units and divisions of NKGB and the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs stationed in the plains of the Chechen-Ingush republic under the disguise of regular army infantry and artillery divisions that had ostensibly arrived from the front for rest, received a Panther radio signal indicating the start of universal deportation of the population.

At six in the morning, nineteen thousand investigators the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs-NKGB and SMERSH (mili-

tary counterintelligence) fattened while staying with the families of mountaineers, a hundred thousand soldiers and officers of the armed forces of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and thirty one thousand regular army troops (total 150 thousand, one per 3.2 peaceful inhabitants) rushed into the dwellings of serenely sleeping Chechens and began to expel them with the butts of machine guns to collective farm yards and squares.

The frightened peaceful people collected on those so-called assembly points could not understand in any way what had happened, what happened with these front-line soldiers - defenders of the Native land who the day earlier had been so polite and humane. Why did they suddenly turn into castigators and, swearing dirty, were forcefully pushing them, while they were preparing a holiday dinner for the soldiers, into covered trucks without any explanations?

Chains of Studebaker trucks delivered the doomed people to railway stations and unloaded them into unheated commodity cars used for transportation of cattle.

180 trains fully loaded with confused and understanding nothing mountaineers, rushed across the country to the cold steppes of Kirghizia and Kazakhstan. On the boundless open spaces of the Soviet Native land, they were leaving on railroad platforms and along roads thousands of the dead. The relatives were not allowed to bury the corpses. They were robbed by marauders and then thrown naked into pits along the railroads.

It is necessary to give due to the ingenuity of Lavrenty Beria, General Commissioner of State Security. His smart dodge was successful: at the height of combat with Nazi aggressors he saved his elite troops. Under a specious excuse of eviction of unseemly peoples to Siberia and Kazakhstan, efficient regiments and divisions of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs-NKGB were withdrawn from the fronts of Great Patriotic War. They were sent to fight in deep rear against defenseless the families of those who were giving their life and blood in combat against fascist aggressors.

It should be noted that Stalin authorized Beria's Jesuitical plan of state authorized mass *defection* of People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs-NKGB troops from places of battle, so treacherous in relation to the soldiers who continued fighting on the front-line. Thus, infantry regiments and divisions became short of military equipment, trucks and horses, food supplies and outfit that were in such a need at the front-line. All of us remember the documentary films where starving, in torn clothes, sometimes barefoot Soviet soldiers were dragging on their shoulders heavy guns and push underpowered trucks along muddy roads. And horses? Without food, they were doing miracles dragging carts with ammunition to the trenches!

During the time of the most decisive bat-



tles of the war, thousand most powerful cross-country vehicles and American Studebakers were rolling across Northern Caucasus and well-fed and well-cared Beria's troops in brand new uniforms, disguising themselves in Red Army uniform, were chasing women, children, and old men, showing off their loyalty to the Soviet power. They were chasing defenseless families whose men were spilling blood at the front not knowing that they were in fact protecting the Beria rule and Stalinism, which is devilry and Satanism! And in the middle of it, Commander-in-chief Joseph Stalin awarded Commander-in-chief of murderers Lavrenty Beria with the supreme military order of Suvorov of 1st degree for the heroism displayed in the struggle against women, children, and old men!

BERIA'S MILITARY GIFT

On the Red Army Day, February 23, 1944, the NKGB military operation in Checheno-Ingushetiya took place so fast that already at 11 o'clock in the afternoon happy Beria, who had arrived in Grozny in the government armored train from Moscow, cabled a victorious telegram to Moscow:

"Top Secret. State Defense Committee. Comrade Stalin.

Today, on February 23, at dawn, we began the operation on eviction of the Chechens and the Ingushs. Eviction is going on in a normal way. There are no incidents worthy attention. There were 6 cases of resistance attempts by individuals, which were stopped by arrests or the use of weapons. Among those people planned to withdraw in connection with the operation, 842 persons were arrested.

As of 11 o'clock in the morning, 94 thousand and 741 persons were taken away from settlements, i.e. over 20 percent of those subject to eviction, out of which 20 thousand and 23 persons were loaded in railway cars.

Beria 4/23/1944"

The second stage of eviction from the mountain areas of the republic started at dawn

on February 27, after a heavy snowfall. It was impossible to lower children, women, patients and old men down from the mountains along the paths covered with heaps of snow. Downwards were sent only healthy old men, girls and women.

All the ailing people from nearby villages were driven to a high-mountainous village of Khaibakh and pushed into a stable of the collective farm named after Beria. The escorts commanded: *"If you do not wish to freeze, then winterize the shed."* People were not suspecting a mean dirty trick and were dragging hay and straw from stacks, put hay against the walls and covered the floor with a thick layer of straw.

In the meantime, two boys were born in the stable: beautiful Khesa Gazaeva made a present to her husband Alaudin with two twins. The boys were named Khasan and Khusein, everybody participated in choosing their names. What a joy the birth of these kids could be, but...

Colonel Gransky, chief of Galanchozhsky operational sector, hurried to inform major general Gvishiani, commander of the operation in this sector, commissar of state security of 3rd rank, about a successful operation.

According to Malsagov, it went on this way.

"Comrade General, request permission to report!" The colonel servilely reported. *"According to your wise plan, the Chechens have fallen for the bait, they brought hay and straw into the stable and obediently entered into it."*

He also spoke about a combat horse that a year before had been delivered from the front under the order of General Rokossovsky, commander of the Central front, to a large family of a perished settler of Khaibakh.

This combat horse by the name of Khaibakh demonstrated a truly aggressive spirit. Trying to keep close to his masters, he tossed around in front of the closed gate of the stable. Neighed, threateningly winding a head, striving to bite, beat hoofs, kicked, and reared. Sergeant Gnus tried to seize him by the mane and the horse struck him with a metal horseshoe so that they had to call a doctor urgently.

"By the way, it is very good!" - Gvishiani was delighted. - *"Add the horse in the report to those in the stable. One bandit more. Total 704."*

"Comrade General, there are already 705 bandits without the horse," - said the colonel. - *"In the morning, twins were born in the stable."*

"Who, boys or girls?"

"Boys," - assured the colonel.

"So, bandits they are," - the general concluded satisfactory, - *"Put 705 in the report. And I feel pity for the horse. Under a saddle he will go. Bring him to me!"*

"And what to do with children?"

Lavrenty Beria was waiting for his report,

after which he promised to tell what to do with the bandits.

At 11 o'clock in the morning sharp, Beria called Gvishiani on the radio. From their conversation, Gransky could understand only three words: light up the fire. Having drunk a couple more shots of cognac, inspired by the personal consent of Beria, General Gvishiani put on his fur hat, put the handgun behind the belt and gallantly walked towards the doomed "bandits".

He stopped in front of the stable in the pose of Napoleon, made sure that his people were ready and then commanded to set fire.

The people with canisters started running around the stable spilling gasoline on the walls.

The women started screaming desperately...

Tracer bullets from machine guns were the answer. Huge flames of fire touched empty houses, the watchtower, the small river Gekhinka, and went up into the sky.

Stunned Malsagov rushed to Gvishiani:

"There are people there, stop it!"

"Do you want to be there as well?" - The executioner replied furiously. - *"Arrest him!"*

Set on fire, the stable cried. The horrified people rushed to the gate that could not sustain the pressure and fell down together with a part of the wall to the outside. Like torches, burning people rushed through this breach. Among whom was a large Gaev family: 110 years old Tuta, his 100 years old wife Sari, 108 years old younger brother Khatu, and his 90 years old wife Maren with the great-granddaughters 3 years old Rukiat and five years old Aminat. Beside ran his 70 years old son Khasbek with his 60 years old wife Satsita holding their grandsons 7 years old Isa and 9 years old Musa. Khatu's younger son 50 years old athlete Alaudin carried in his strong hands his wife 30 years old Khesa with babies Khasan and Khusein.

The large family of front-line hero-soldiers Gazeov mother Zana with five daughters and four sons managed to escape from this burning hell. She sacrificed her husband and her senior son to the protection of the Native land while she remained defenseless before the Native land that sent castigators against her children.

"What shall we do?" - Colonel Gransky became puzzled.

"These dirty dogs, they want us to feel pity for them!" - General Gvishiani shouted and, as if he was on the front-line, commanded:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

The mountaineers did not know that the executioners had sledge hammers instead of hearts. A squad of machine gunners opened fire with explosive bullets. A mountain of corpses instantly emerged in front of the stable gate. Burning people tried to escape and were climbing up this mountain of burning human flesh, the smell of which was intolerable.

Mighty Alaudin was running away from the stable with his precious burden. Probably the machine gunners could not fire at the babies who were born only 6 hours earlier. Alaudin was five steps away from the general. And the general-executioner did not tremble before the "bandits". He personally shot them with his hand gun. Gvishiani was a sharp



shooter. Athlete Alaudin made a couple more steps, dropped to his knees and gently lowered his wife and sons onto the thawing snow.

Khesa, having collected the rest of her dying forces, knelt and, pressing the babies to her breast, started reading a pray while crawling towards the feet of the executioner.

Gvishiani was curious:

"What is she muttering?"

The translator responded:

"She is praying to save the lives of her babies."

The general spat and, swearing in his native Georgian, smashed the woman in her face with his boot:

"Here is your life!"

The young woman turned on the back and helplessly dropped the babies. They got unswaddled and rolled crying in opposite directions.

"Into the fire! Quickly put them into the fire, so that they don't suffer more!" - The general-executioner demonstrated his pity. Instantly the tiny babies were thrown into the fire one after another.

All the 705 people were already dead when the first drops of rain fell from the sky upon the ashes. Those were tears from heaven. The only tears to mourn the innocent victims openly. As it turned out later, this monstrous tragedy had also other witnesses: the children who had left very early into the wood to collect brushwood managed to escape by miracle. Also there were boys who managed to disap-

pear in the wood during the panic.

"I'd like to name you all by name, but the list Has been removed and there is nowhere else to look," - The great martyress, poet Anna Akhmatova wrote about other victims of the same country.

The Chechens restored their list having named each victim by name in *The White Book* published by historian Gaev, a member of our commission. I was talking about his relatives above.

Enormously tired from what I saw and heard, I wrote a statement together with the members of the commission - the first official document about the Khaibakh tragedy. Here it is:

"THE CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION OF THE PLACE OF MASS EXECUTION, BY WAY OF BURNING AND SHOOTING, OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE FORMER GALANCHOZHISKY DISTRICT OF CHECHEN-INGUSH ASSR DURING FORCEFUL EVICTION IN FEBRUARY, 1944

August 22, 1990. Former settlement Khaibakh, former Galanchozhsky district of Chechen-Ingush ASSR

The Extraordinary Commission consisting of head of Poisk group of the Soviet committee of war veterans S.S.KASHURKO (Chairman of the Commission), former 1st assistant to the people's commissar of justice of Chechen-Ingush ASSR D.G.MALSAGOV, prosecutor of Urus-Martanovsky district, member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Chechen-Ingush ASSR R.U.TSAKAEV, member of the organizing committee on restoration of Ingush autonomy S.Kh.AKHILGOV, and teacher of Gekhi-Chun high school S.D.GAEV, on August 22, visited (by helicopter) the former settlement Khaibakh located in the mountains on the territory of Urus-Martanovsky district.

We examined the place of burning and shooting in a stable of former collective farm named after Beria of about 700 inhabitants, including children, women and old men.

We listened to and recorded on a tape recorder and a video camera the stories of eyewitnesses of this unimaginable tragedy in mountains.

To confirm the accomplished evil deed against innocent people, excavation of burnt and shot bodies was made.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The commission acknowledges an established fact of mass execution of people in Khaibakh and recognizes it as genocide. The perpetrators of this evil deed must be prosecuted.

2. To exhort both state and public organizations and all citizens to render all assistance to the examination of the specified fact."

The certificate was signed by each member of our commission.

Over 150 people who gathered at the place of the tragedy asked me to read the certificate. In full silence, struggling with spasms in my throat, I tried to read loudly to be heard by all. But my voice seemed to be existing separate from me - it sounded as if I was reading a verdict. And, as if feeling that the trial of history started, one of the elders asked me speaking for all:

"Dear Stepan, our low bow to you and a great request: if possible, please, deliver here the executioner Gvishiani. Not for punishment, we only want him to have a look at the ashes here - the deeds of his bloody hands. We only want to look into his eyes."

Dziaudin Malsagov fully supported the request. All these years he kept an eye on the murderer and informed that, according to his data, Gvishiani had moved from Moscow to Tbilisi and headed an organization of state security veterans.

I promised to fulfill the request without delay before the bloody executioner got warned by KGB secret informers who should be expected among those who continued to live in the republic among the Chechens.

MY SEARCH FOR GVISHIANI

I knew exactly how I would accomplish this operation. I decided to roll up the executioner in a carpet and secretly take him out in it to Khaibakh.

Together with a member of the extraordinary commission Salam Akhilgov and a well-known in Ingushetia athlete Isa Ozdov who could carry over 100 kg in one hand, we drove the following day to Tbilisi where we were met by the candidate for President of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia. He listened to us with understanding and helped us to get into Gvishiani's magnificent private residence. Unfortunately, we were late. The monster stricken by paralysis died.

We, introduced as historians, were kindly met by his relative Artsemida, the widow of the younger Gvishiani brother, colonel of state security. This respectable old woman, a former employee of the administration of the Supreme Soviet of Georgia, courteously handed to us a family album with photos of her brother-in-law general. Yes, the look of the executioner corresponded to his acts. Colorless, as if it were glass, eyes. Thin, densely compressed lips, a strong doubled chin. In a word, the face of a general who doesn't know mercy.

Artsemida told us about what only a few knew. It turned out that in 1947 the monster Gvishiani managed to become related with the well-known statesman Alexey Nikolaevich Kosygin. His son Dzhermen married Kosygin's daughter Lyudmila. The offspring of the executioner subsequently became Chairman of the Council of the International institute of System Analysis of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, member of the Academy of Sciences. He died in May 2003 soon after the death of

his spouse Lyudmila Kosygina.

So, the executioner Gvishiani avoided death sentence together with Beria thanks to Kosygin, more correctly, to his capricious and despotic wife Claudia.

"Claudia Andreevna kept her soft and good-natured husband in very tight hands," Artsemida told us with enthusiasm. *"Often, sitting in a magnificent armchair, Claudia would slap on the fat thigh: 'Lyosha, come to me!' And Alexey Nikolaevich who never objected to her was immediately there at her feet. 'What, Claudia, what?' And when Gvishiani was arrested she approached Kosygin with an ultimatum: 'I will keep bugging you until you get your relative free!' And she did keep bugging him until the executioner was released."*

Then, happy enough with the fact that we were listening to her with special attention, the talkative Artsemida told about a very important thing for us. After fulfilling the government task in the Chechen Republic, on March 8, 1944, her brother-in-law came from Grozny to visit her. He arrived in a new uniform with general golden shoulder straps. A handsome man captain Antonov, his aide-de-camp, dragged two big leather suitcases into the house. Once, when Mikhail Maksimovich Gvishiani was late, the aide-de-camp decided to treat Artsemida and her children with tiled chocolate. He opened one of the suitcases and was stupefied in horror. He was mistaken, he opened a wrong suitcase. That suitcase was filled up with stolen jewelry: diamonds, gold ornaments, gold watches, rings, necklaces, knives, and daggers.

The aide-de-camp got frightened and began to close the suitcase with shivering

hands. At this moment the drunk general appeared on the porch: *"Who allowed you to open the suitcase with confidential materials?"* - He cried furiously and, having snatched out the handgun, he aimed it at the captain who suddenly turned pale from scare. Artsemida felt pity for a handsome man and she hang on the arm of her brother-in-law. The bullet did not touch the captain. But he was then degraded and dismissed from service.

CRIMINAL CASE #90610010

A week after the extraordinary commission signed its statement of inspection of the place of mass burning of people, on August 31, 1990, public prosecutor of Urus-Martanovsky district Ruslan Tsakaev initiated criminal case 90610010 that lasted exactly three years with variable success. Those who did not want to accept the state genocide hindered the work of inspector Musa Khadisov in every possible way. There were repeated attempts to stop or destruct this undesirable case.

Once it seemed that the mean purpose was almost achieved. The inspector was enticed to go to Rostov-on-Don where someone planned to hide stop the case.

But the courageous Musa Khadisov informed the State Office of Public Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic on August 20, 1993: *"During investigation of the case to reveal the concrete individuals guilty of murdering the Chechen people, the Office of Public Prosecutor of Chechen-Ingush ASSR and RSFSR entrusted further investigation to the Office of Military Prosecutor of Grozny military garrison and then passed it further to the city of Rostov-on-Don."*

The Office of Public Prosecutor of

Rostov-on-Don and the Office of Public Prosecutor of the Russian Federation did not respond to numerous demands to return the case back to the Office of Public Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic.

However, before submitting the case to the Office of Military Prosecutor, I providently copied and saved it in its original.

In connection with the stated above, there remained the persons guilty of the genocide of the Chechen people who were not charged with criminal liability, no judicial-legal estimation was given to the activities of the supreme officials of the USSR - I.Stalin, L.Beria, commissars of state security Serov, Kobulov, Kruglov, Apollonov, and other individuals supervising the fulfillment of the most terrible crime against the Chechen people through its physical extermination."

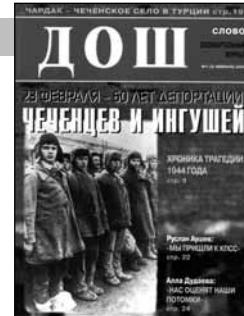
Then detailed charges followed against the above mentioned statesmen of the USSR. However, the case about the genocide in the country of Bolsheviks-Communists was not allowed to reach its logical end. A bloody war started in the Chechen Republic and the criminals of high rank who had committed this terrible crime remained unpunished.

The tragedy in Khaibakh is not only a reminder on the tragedy of the entire Soviet people. It is not only a reminder for people to struggle together for their rights and lives. The tragedy in Khaibakh is our national shame that before today did not burn our conscience and our soul but we henceforth should learn to live with.

Who will stop this avalanche of evil?



GUILTY THOUGH GUILTLESS



Dosh #1(3)2004
Svetlana ALIEVA

We live in the country of surprises. It amazes with a repressive, in all aspects of this concept, attitude of the state to its citizens. There are a few countries where authorities are so assured that cruelty and meanness will remain unpunished. And, perhaps, nowhere will you meet such patience of the people who are ready to indefatigably wait for the improvement of their life and who have such a boundless trust in the promises of their successive masters. The indignant protests and demands of justice can be heard here sometimes louder and sometimes more silently and less often while the situation does not change. I will not list the old, already habitual insults but I will tell about one of them, I will try to punch one more time the concrete wall of indifference to the fate of the so-called *small peoples* of our multinational country, especially those who for some supreme, incomprehensible ideological reasons were subjected to civil execution only for their nationality.

What is the repression against a nationality? Nobody wishes to investigate it properly. Isn't it strange? It's been a long time that political repressions were recognized and widely publicized - individual, on presentation of concrete charge, basically, reduced to disagreement with the ideological politics of the communist party that seized the power in the country. Also much was told about social repressions - their goal was to destroy classes hostile to the proletariat, the infringement in the civil rights of everyone who possessed something, owned something before the revolution, including the intelligentsia that was declared *rotten* and alien to the new world. However, repressions against nationalities are persistently ignored up to this day, even in a new century, though it is high time to pronounce a sober judgment to all the crimes accomplished in the last century.

Meanwhile, the peoples of our country one after another mark round dates of the repressions that they went through: the Cossacks, the Russian Germans, the Kalmyks, the Karachays, and now the Chechens and the Ingushs. Sixty years ago, unprecedented violence was committed against them, they were slandered, subjected to mass, total arrest and deportation, deprived of civil rights, their language and culture were prohibited, their history and their name were crossed out from the list of peoples of the country, and they even tried to erase their trace from their native land. It was possible to kill them unpunished, and it happened pretty often. Thus, on the day of deportation, having collected the sick and those who lagged behind

in a stable, they burnt more than seven hundred people alive - the Chechen old men, women, and children.

Any villainy, no matter how hard the criminal tries to hide the act, always has a witness or an exposing document. One year prior to burning peaceful inhabitants in the village of Khaibakh, while preparing accusation charges to deport the Balkars, commander of an interservice team of the 11th shooting division of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs captain N.F.Nakin reported: *"I take hostages, work ruthlessly, destroy all the population, and burn down buildings... For the period from 11/27/1942 through 11/30/1942, five settlements were destroyed: Upper Balkaria, Sautu, Kunyum, Upper Cheget, and Glashevo. The former three were burnt down. About 1,500 people were destroyed!"* Did the country know about this? No. It became known about this only ten years ago. Tired from the multitude of other exposures, the society didn't seem to get scared.

Yes, these crimes of the state against its own citizens, capable to eclipse the atrocities of the Nazis, have escaped public attention and are covered under silence. Neither repentances, nor decisions. As if nothing happened.

A little over ten years ago, the Law on Rehabilitation of Peoples Subjected to Repressions was adopted, yet it was gradually forgotten, hidden under the cloth as a mistake of the democrats because it was ostensibly menacing the integrity of Russia. Whereas our country is a unique **FEDERATION** of a multitude of indigenous peoples and the sum of their territories the country's space.

During the time of their unlimited power, the cleaners from the leadership of the Communist Party and its executioners body NKVD-NKGB discovered quite a lot of peoples - enemies of the Soviet power. It is time to seriously investigate, at last, why such a misfortune as persecution of guiltless Koreans, Kalmyks, Russian Germans, Greeks, Karachays, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, Baltic peoples, Poles, Ingermanlanders, and others occurred in our history. Isn't it because this issue has been ignored, the not being properly informed citizens of our country are still inclined to see criminals, traitors of the native land, and potentially dangerous individuals among the peoples who had been subjected to repressions?

The Chechens and the Ingushs are still in this black list. It is necessary to point out that though the Russian people is not present in this list, it also expe-



rienced ethnic repressions, only in a very original, latent form. Here Stalin demonstrated extreme insidiousness. He drowned the Russian people, its consciousness in plentiful false flattery, extolling it above the others, thus provoking conceit on the one hand and anti-Russian mood on the other. By opposing the Russians to fellow citizens of other ethnic groups, he generously sowed plentiful seeds of ethnic conflicts.

It should also be noted that part of the repressed peoples remained in world history: the Stalin government could not withdraw from history, for example, the Koreans, Kurds, Poles, Greeks, Germans, Estonians, Lithuanians, or Latvians. Whereas the native peoples and ethnic groups of the Northern Caucasus, such as the Chechens, the Ingushs, the Karachays, the Balkars, the Crimean Tatars, and the Kalmyks, were being destroyed, as it was supposed in those days, for ever.

So, what was basis for all those repressions against these peoples?

It couldn't be simpler - the repressions were based on the concept of ethnic policy developed personally by Stalin and his henchmen and adopted by the XVIth Congress of VKP(b) in July 1930. The concept was under development since 1913. Here is how it evolved.

"A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of people that emerged on the basis of common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a community of culture."

It is hard to disagree, indeed. However, while building a new world, the revolutionaries had to transform the laws of history. It was discovered that the absence of at least one of these attributes was enough for a nation to cease to be a nation. Later, the reason why it was necessary to find and destroy at least one the attributes was substantiated. It was said that: *"the workers are interested in a complete merge of all comrades into a uniform international army."* It was specified that *"the*

unity of a nation loosens not only owing to moving people to other places, and it loosens still inside owing to an aggravation of class struggle."

Since 1918, the Bolsheviks started to destroy the unity of nations from inside through the aggravation of class struggle. Thus, social and class repressions started, such as the destruction of the Cossacks and national intelligentsia, which was a heavy blow on the Russian people, and especially on smaller peoples.

Further it was stated that the *village is the keeper of nationalities* (the Xth Congress of VKP(b), March 8-16, 1921). It was confirmed four years later: *the nationality issue is a matter of fact a peasant issue.*

Finally, the program of speedy construction of socialism in a separate country adopted at the XVIth Congress of VKP(b) included the following statement: *"During the period of victory of socialism on a WORLD SCALE, when socialism solidifies and becomes part of everyday life, national languages should inevitably merge into one common language, which, of course, will be neither Great Russian, nor Great German."*

This is where Stalin let the cat out of the bag: he did not want the Great Russian language to become the language of international communication.

So, during the realization of the ideas of the great leader, the village was crushed, the educated owner was expelled from the village everywhere. This was followed with withdrawal and nationalization, which meant wasting the property of the exiled and creating collective farms under the direction of the ideologically educated workers who were sent to villages. These workers, however, were absolutely illiterate in agriculture, which resulted in the terrible famine that caused mass migrations and escape of the perishing from famine agricultural population of Russian and Ukrainian traditional agricultural territories. So, *dekulakization* and

collectivization as a matter of fact already became the first action of the Stalinist nationality policy. Its successful implementation meant the fulfillment of the following task. Remember, the absence of at least one of the attributes of a nation is enough for the nation to cease to exist. A suitable attribute was found - it was decided to exclude common territory.

And it started. Deafened by flattering solemn speeches, the Russian people was moved under plausible pretexts to every corner of the immense territory of the multinational country. Starting from 1930, the Russian ethnic territory became purposefully devastated. It was more difficult to do away in a similar way with the republics and autonomies. Therefore, since 1930, the authorities gradually started to test the methods of moving smaller peoples and dispersed ethnic groups from the places of their traditional dwelling to other climatic conditions, far away from their native lands. Thus, The Jewish Republic was suddenly established in the Far East where the Jews never lived. It can be considered the first ethnic deportation. Luckily, the Jews were not driven to the Far East by force, the mission was limited to propaganda appeals that attracted many but not all. Whereas The Koreans, now on forged charges, were deported from the Far East to Uzbekistan in two stages, in 1934 and 1937. Then Stalin started to clean the polyethnic Caucasus, started with Georgia by deporting the Meskhethian Turks, then the Greeks, and then he deported the Kurds from Azerbaijan and Armenia. After signing the peace treaty with Hitler he began to put things in order in Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, the Baltics, in the meantime he did away with the Poles, the Ingermanlanders by deporting and partially killing them. By that time, the Soviet country became an expert in organizing not only political and social repressions but ethnic repressions as well, now in an open fashion. Then the war started, which considerably made it easier for Stalin and Beria to invent the reasons for deportations by attributing a more decent visibility of protection of Fatherland to illegal punishments. What could be easier than deporting the Germans of the Volga region for their potential readiness to betray Russia to the Nazi, and the peoples of Northern Caucasus, irrespective of whether they were under occupation or not, for the forged assistance to the fascists, betrayal of motherland, Stalin, and the Soviet power. The people were called traitors based only on their ethnic attribute, even babies, even the unborn.

Everything was trampled: honor, dignity of the citizen of the *defective* nationality, to say nothing of human rights.

It is quite appropriate to recollect a fable by the great Russian fable writer Ivan Andreevich Krylov. The wolf talking with the lamb: the lamb is cornered, his death is approaching, and he, being so foolish, does not realize it, tries to be justified, to prove that he is guiltless, but he is facing an eternal and unbeatable strong argument: *"You are guilty only because I am hungry! That said, the wolf dragged the lamb into a dark forest."*

Guiltless, belied, slandered, the repressed peoples experience abuse even today. Since the moment of the crime committed on them by the government and its ideology, these peoples are trying to protect themselves, to defend their right to a worthy life, and adapt to the circumstances involuntarily losing their tradi-

tional moral values and therefore impoverishing the country where they live.

However, in defiance of all their tribulations, they respect the right of everyone to their originality irrespective of the size of an ethnic group.

The most terrible thing is that Stalin's national concept is preserved and continues to live in our country and it a threat of new tragedies. Neither after the XXth congress of CPSU, when Stalin's cult was exposed and rehabilitation of repressed citizens and peoples began, nor under Khrushchev, nor under Brezhnev or even under Gorbachev there was no one who attempted to comprehend the bloody lessons of our national history taking into consideration that we live in a country that developed territorially and psychologically from a multitude of peoples. Underestimation of this and preservation of Stalin's concept of national policy led to disintegration of the USSR. And today the same reasons lead to shaking the foundation of the Russian statehood.

Quite recently, the USSR seemed indestructible and its boundaries seemed a reality that was not subject to any changes. Nowadays, we amuse ourselves with an illusion as if it is possible to strengthen the borders of Russian Federation and forever solidify its territorial integrity by use of force and neglecting the development of essentially new concepts of national policy, though it is the primary thing that needs to be done in our polyethnic country. We still feel pride for our magnificent state not willing to understand that the times have changed.

However, let's return to the primary occasion of this conversation, the 60th anniversary of the deportation of the Chechens and the Ingushs. The return of the exiled people to their native land, the restoration of statehood in 1958 did not completely solve the ethnic issues of the repressed people. It was painfully felt during the subsequent decades until the 1990s. The hope for a just solution emerged in 1991, when the Law on Rehabilitation of the Repressed Peoples was passed. In vain: no one returned to the Ingushs their patrimonial lands. Their protest caused a shameful for all Russia slaughter in Northern Ossetia in October-November of 1992, which passed unpunished and only aggravated the problems. In 1994, the leadership of the country was short of state wisdom to politically solve not yet a conflict but rather a misunderstanding that emerged between the Chechen Republic and the Federation. Instead, the state hardliners initiated the massacre with the purpose of re-educating the Chechens that has dragged on for a decade and that has brought so much grief to peoples of all nationalities. The consequence of this is the destruction of cities and villages of the blossoming region and the genocide that has dishonored our country all over the world. The state is at war with its own citizens, isn't it madness?

Today is the anniversary of the deportation - the 60th anniversary of the Chechen and the Ingush tragedy that doesn't seem to have an end. Isn't it time to start thinking?

It would be very desirable that the feeling of justice could wake up in our statesmen, as well as the genuine and not an ostentatious belief in God! Then they would probably apologize before the Chechens, the Ingushs, the Karachays, the Balkars, the Germans, the Crimean Tatars, and the Kalmyks. And before the Russians, too.



Dosh #2(4)2004
Tamara AKHTAEVA

THE TRAGEDY OF SAMASHKI: TESTIMONIES OF THE SURVIVORS

*In this world, the sprout of truth will not grow,
Justice did not rule the world at all,
Do not fancy that you will change the flow of life,
Do not hold on the chopped off branch, man!*
Omar Khayyam

This bitter thought visited Omar Khayyam 800 years ago but his words hold true in the modern world as well. Reason should distinguish between true and false. But today there is no truth with a capital letter. Or, perhaps, it exists but it is not accepted to speak about it for a while and therefore it is locked under seven seals.

The full-scale war that is being waged against the peaceful population of the Chechen Republic, either under the excuse of “*establishing the constitutional order*”, or under the name of an *antiterrorist operation*, does not grant anyone the moral right to remain a detached observer. Vacuum, phosphoric, ball-stuffed, needle-stuffed, and deep-sea bombs of the first war killed tens of thousands of the inhabitants of the Chechen Republic (let alone the victims of the second war over the past five years) including women, children, and old people. In Grozny alone, almost fifty thousand peaceful citizens were killed including six thousand children.

Hundreds of Chechen men, including teenagers, disappeared or were crippled in filtration camps. Entire cities and villages were completely burnt or destroyed. The Chechens who lost a roof over their heads are scattered worldwide today. Under the pretext of *cleaning* the military can burn alive old people, women, and

children from flame throwers or hang children in a school building, as it took place in Samashki.

It is impossible to comprehend in mind or especially accept with the heart what happened and continues to happen in the Chechen Republic.

Alas, the criminal situation in the Chechen Republic has become legalized. The Chechen Republic became a special region where it is possible to commit any crime or break all human rights without punishment. It does not seem to worry the world community, almost everyone has reconciled that it is an internal affair of Russia that goes under the name of an *antiterrorist operation* or *the fight on terrorism*.

Certainly, terrorism is a serious problem of the modern world and there needs to be a fight on it. But it is also important to understand the reason for its emergence to prevent its further expansion. It is necessary to experience with your own heart the reality that causes it and then get to the essence of it to subject it to a fair, unbiased analysis.

Everyday chores, the pursuit of material goods, earthly power and honors make us forget about simple commandments of God. God created us different, divided peoples and tribes so that we could learn from each other. Each people is a mirror in which another people sees the reflection of its own merits and weaknesses. In fact, it is only the Creator who gives us our souls. And it is only Him who has the right to deprive us of it. God has reserved this right both in the Koran and in the Bible and no human is allowed to usurp this right no matter what purposes or reason are used to justify it.

The village of Samashki with the population of over 11,000 people is located in the West of the Chechen Republic.

It has been written a lot about the tragedy of Samashki. From 1995 till 1999, the inhabitants of the village experienced three military assaults that resulted in the loss of over 800 lives of peaceful population, 2260 houses were destroyed or burnt.

The scale of murders and atrocities in Samashki is comparable to that of the tragedy of Khaibakh in 1944.

On April 6, 1995, Lieutenant-General A.A. Antonov (aka General Romanov who was later seriously wounded in a mine explosion at Minutka Square) offered an ultimatum to the inhabitants of Samashki: till 7 o'clock AM of April 7, to hand over 300 automatic guns, 2 machine guns and one armored vehicle (ostensibly given to the village civil guardsmen in the times of Dzhokhar Dudaev). During the meeting with the general, the members of the delegation of Samashki stated that they could not hand over such amount of weapons because they didn't have any. Also, they asked to prolong the term of the ultimatum for three more days to collect at least a fourth

of the demanded number of weapons. However, the bombardment of the village started late at night of April 6 - in the early hours of April 7. Intensive artillery and mine fire lasted from 11 PM in the evening till 2 AM in the morning, bombardment from aircraft and fire from armored vehicles started at 5 AM in the morning.

At the next meeting with L. Abdulkhadzhiev, head of Samashki village administration, Lieutenant-General Antonov (Romanov) frankly said: “*We could not come to an agreement with you. Now it is beyond my authority any more, other troops that do not report to me will operate here.*”

A new general didn't want to hear anything and kept saying that starting from 4 PM he would start executing his duty to bomb the village. Having realized that it was not possible to agree and that they only had two hours of delay, the head of administration and the elders suggested that the fellow villagers abandoned their dwellings immediately.

The village was in panic. A teenager was wounded, houses were burning. The military demonstrated their perfidy: they started fire from every possible gun 20

minutes prior to the expiration of the ultimatum. Many villagers had no time to leave the village before the bombardment started and many got under fire while they were walking along the road. The villagers were also frightened because all men were detained while they were leaving the village and taken by helicopters to a filtration camp in Mozdok. Therefore many men took the risk of not leaving the village.

According to various sources, the operation of taking the village was carried out by a group of internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Sofrino brigade) together with members of Moscow and Moscow Region OMON, and also Orenburg SOBR. Ten assault groups were created. It is also known that people from Vitiaz group participated in the operation.

The Russian armies while establishing the constitutional order operated using the most refined methods: the people who had no time to leave the village remained under non-stop fire for five days, which was a true hell.

B.Akhmetov tells:

"My parents were literate, they spoke Russian really well. The father was a member of the Communist Party, had a medal for labor achievements. He was absolutely confident that the federal troops would not cause him or other old men any harm.

"On the day of the assault, there remained the following people in the cellar: my father, Abdul-Vakhab Ahmetov, my mother, A.Abi, and my brother, A.Balavdi (he came to visit with his parents for a while from Kemerovo, an officer, he graduated from the military Academy in Khabarovsk and had no relation to the insurgents), and also neighbors, old men Doga Tsatyshoev, Madu Rasuev, Yuki, Bala, and others.

"In the evening of April 7, the military entered the courtyard in an armored personnel carrier. They examined the house, the cellar, the courtyard - there was nothing suspicious. They asked the mother to give them something to drink. She opened a jar with compote and offered it to them. When leaving, they decided to take my brother Balavdi with them. They assured the mother and the old men that would take him to the headquar-

ters for a check and return him back. All night long the mother cursed herself and the others for letting take her son away.

"In the morning, having heard the roar of the approaching armored personnel carrier, the mother ran out on the porch to meet her son. At the gate, she was shot by one of the officers who drank compote from her hands the day before.

"The same happened also to the father who ran out shouting: 'Why do you kill old people?!' The other old men who remained in the cellar were burnt with a flame thrower. They tied Balavdi to the armored personnel carrier and brutally killed him the same evening."

Shepa tells:

"They treated us as if we were dogs. They were arrogant and rude. They kicked everyone from the cellar: women, children, and old men. With us in the cellar, there was also a sick old man Shamsaev, they ordered to take him out too. All the men, irrespective of age, were lined up along the street, forced to undress and take off the boots and remove the belts. With dirty cursing, speeding us up with dogs and tanks, they drove us into the camp on the opposite end of the village. The sick person on a stretcher was forced to carry his relatives and when they understood that he was slowing down the process, they ordered to put him on the ground and said they would take care of him themselves. And they did: they first shot him and then drove over the sick old man Shamsaev in an armored personnel carrier on."

Khasan tells:

"I escaped from fire in a neighbor's cellar together with other villagers. In the morning of April 8, the federal troops ran into the house and killed several people among whom there were women and children. And then, not giving anybody any opportunity to leave, set the cellar on fire; they threw a hand grenade in there. The women shouted that there were their children and old men.

"They tied me up to an armored personnel carrier and dragged me behind it slowly because on their way they set on fire every fourth



house, having plundered it preliminary. They smoked a lot. They found a Russian guy in one house who had arrived to stay for a while with his colleague. They beat him only because he had come to visit a Chechen. They tied him and two more Chechens up to an armored personnel carrier and dragged them to the crossing. Then they untied everyone and threw us into a ditch. The commander roared: 'Shoot them!' At this moment, a truck approached and instead of shooting they loaded us into the truck and brought to the camp. They threw us on the ground next to others. They all beat us with gun butts, set dogs at us, and then forced to climb into the truck with the hands tied. We lay down against each other in four or five layers. Many were undressed, some people wearing only underwear. We were fortunate because we were above the others. People shouted from below. They choked and if someone slipped, the dog would bite him or he would receive a kick with a machine gun butt. There was a case when a guy refused to lie down atop of his father, he was beaten in a terrible way but he insisted, he wouldn't even listen to his father. I do not know precisely what they did with him but they hardly left him alive. We were not allowed even to lift our heads.

"They brought us to helicopters. They threw us out from the truck as if we were garbage. We had to run along a line of soldiers on the way to the helicopter, if you are slow - a dog will bite you, and they beat us all the way. Finally, they brought us to Mozdok. It is hard to describe what they did to us in filtration camps. Cells were overcrowded; it was very difficult to breathe. Food was limited; we were given to drink every other day. During interrogations, they jeered at us with the most refined methods. Those who survived left that place crippled.

"They tortured us with electric shockers, thrusting them even in our mouths; they chopped off toes of the feet, stuck needles under nails, broke or cut off arms, legs; beat on kidneys and on the breast.

"They forced us to sign papers without letting us look at what was in them. They told us that the answer 'no' did not exist for them; and many, having no relation to the insurgents, invented stories and names of insurgents on the fly; under tortures they said everything what the torturers wished to hear from them."

Toita tells:

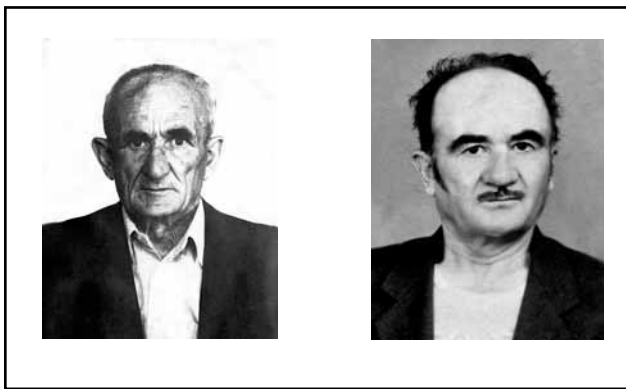
"When it was announced that it was necessary to run away from the village, I started to pack things together with mother and sisters, but the father, with

his handicapped brother, flatly refused. The father was confident that nobody would touch them: 'I will find common language with Russian soldiers. I am retired, the brother is an invalid, and they are not animals. Do not worry about us'.

"The father, Said-Khasan Surkhashev, was shot in the courtyard with a plate in his hands; he was probably feeding the uncle and, having heard the noise of the approaching armored personnel carrier, he hurried towards the soldiers to warn them that only elderly people were in the house. The uncle, Saipi Surkhashev, was burnt together with the house.

"They didn't let us in the village for a long time. The village of Samashki was unrecognizable: destruction all around, torn bodies of people and animals in streets everywhere.

"The father was lying all swelled up. We hardly managed to collect the remains of the uncle. Because of this shock the mother developed a cancer tumor and exactly three years later we buried her.



"The retaliatory group found our neighbor, pensioner Vakha Abdullaev, while he was praying. When they came up to him, he naturally did not interrupt his prayer. For this they stitched his head with automatic gun fire. It was a terrible picture, God forbid to anybody to see such a thing."

Many human rights organizations tried to investigate the reasons and circumstances of mass infringements of elementary human rights, murders, tortures, arsons, and mockeries. Numerous commissions were created, reports were heard. However, the Parliamentary Commission in its Conclusion, based only on the data supplied by the military and completely ignoring numerous eyewitness reports of the villagers, declared that there had been no infringements of the norms of international law on the part of the military.

Having realized that it was impossible to attain justice and tired of all this, the villagers slowly began to rebuild and adjust to a new life.

In March 1996, federal troops destroyed it again. The military started a new operation to establish control over Samashki and, speaking frankly, commenced to do away with the remaining women, children, and elders.

When on March 15, 1996, federal armies began to storm the village, there were at least 11,000 people in Samashki who were used as animated targets. A squall of fire, shells and rockets fell upon the village. Very few managed to leave the village this time. A short delay proved it was impossible to enter into the same river twice.

During this assault, the military again demonstrated an exceptional cruelty. This time they were up in arms against the dwellings of peasants. They burnt houses and entire streets, certainly, having preliminary plundered them. They took expensive equipment and woolen carpets out of the houses, and also took away women's jewelry.

They were very inventive regarding their own safety. They put Chechen women on top of tanks and armored personnel carriers and said: "If your folks shoot, we shall die together". According to one of

these women, the soldiers operated according to strict instructions that set the exact numbers of captured and killed people as well as the number of burnt houses; each was given precise numbers. While sitting on top of the tank, she heard an officer talking on a portable radio: "How many houses were burnt?" Then he added: "Too few! There should be ten".

They did not spare anybody or anything. They threw hand grenades into cellars with children and women.

Here are more eyewitness stories:

Imran tells:

"They bombed the village very long, almost non-stop, with all available means. Houses were set on fire, villagers were shot. People did not know where to run and hide from direct hits. People were hiding themselves in cellars with concrete covering, I myself was in one of such cellars. There were a lot of people jammed in the cellar, it was very tight. Once we heard how a tank approached. It completely demolished the house with two shots. We were shrouded with a cloud of smoke and dust. People in the cellar started to panic, they were shouting and crying. However, to our surprise, the tank moved away. Probably they didn't have an idea that there could be a cellar, otherwise they would have burnt us, just like the others. We were fortunate, but many were not.

"It was difficult to calm women and children, and a hundred-year old deaf woman who understood nothing kept asking us to let her out from this hell. There were a lot of people in the cellar, it was very hard to breathe, and there was nothing to eat. We tried to explain to her that it was even worse above; that if she left, she would be killed by Russian soldiers. She refused to believe in it: 'They cannot kill me: my husband was at war together with them against the Germans.'"



"When there was absolutely nothing to eat, the old man Ziyavdi killed the cow and distributed meat in the cellars. He had a pregnant wife on the ninth month and three children here in the cellar. During a lunch break he home together with his family, prob-

ably, to have a bite, and on the way back a shell struck on them.

"His younger daughter ran into the cellar covered in blood all over. She said that the father, the mother, the brother and the sister were wounded and they needed help. I was amazed how this seven-year old girl replied to the shout and crying of women: 'Do not cry, please don't, everything will be all right.' Most likely she repeated the words of her father when all of them were fatally wounded and she escaped by miracle.

"When we, several men, came running to them with help, the pregnant woman and her daughter were already dead but the father and the son were still breathing. They lay in a pool of blood. We tried to lift them but their bones were so shattered that only skin remained in our hands when we tried to catch them by hands and legs. The son groaned and Ziyavdi looked at us and said his last words: 'Hey, guys, the world is falling apart! It is sliding in a chasm... Keep strong!'"

"We buried them; to be exact, dug them in the courtyard: the father together with the son, the mother next to the daughter and together with one more unborn child.

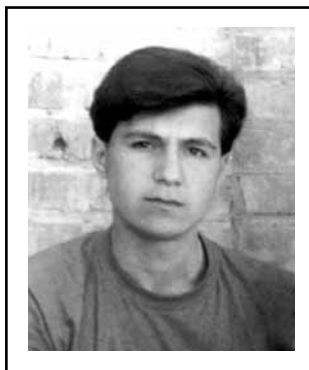
"There were many killed and wounded. We, having understood that they were killing us without indiscriminately and having reconciled to the idea on death –

what's the difference where you would be killed, in the cellar or on the road – moved towards the exit. Many others who were hiding in neighboring cellars joined us. A whole crowd accumulated at the exit. They did not want to let us out. Moreover, a helicopter that was striking rockets on the village, launched a rocket into the crowd of people. Two people were killed; more than a dozen were wounded. Yunus Kulaev lost both eyes, and when the world grew dim for him he, thinking that he was dying, became very calm. An elder read a prayer above him but when has said the last words: 'May Allah forgive your sins!' He said unexpectedly for all: 'Isn't it too early that you bury me, Vosha?' It was exactly the case when people say it was laughter through tears."

According to the stories told by the inhabitants of Samashki, the people who gathered at the exit were kept in the cold without water or food for three days. They did not let them out and did not admit anybody to them. The wounded died here of decaying wounds, there was nothing to help them with. In a word, those who could survive provided they received necessary medical aid, died.

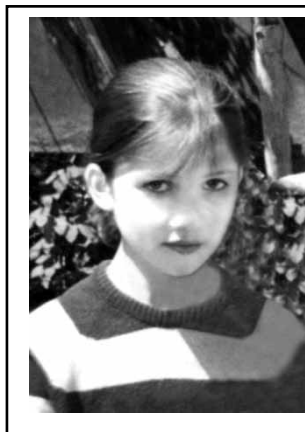
Zhansari tells:

"It was a terrible picture, destruction all around, the cattle shot down in the streets, broken bodies, and a terrible smell of decaying corpses. When I saw a syringe with Panadol on the ground, I understood that they encouraged themselves with some narcotic preparations that gave them bravery. In fact, who would be capable of such atrocities in normal condition?"



"And indeed, when the helicopter launched a rocket at the people at the village exit, the soldiers saw the victims and heard women shouting and children crying, and they cried themselves; they understood, to put it mildly, the injustice towards the peaceful inhabitants, but they could not disobey the orders. What happened to us was awful and cannot be forgotten. We may forgive sometime in the future but will the God forgive?!"

The sufferings of the inhabitants of Samashki did not end there. In October 1999, the same almost repeats, only this



time from the air. The village suffered from a heavy bombardment. As it was stated later, those were pinpoint attacks against the insurgents. One of such victims was a blue-eyed twelve-year old, Elina. She was the best student at school, the love of all neighbors, and, despite an early age, a great assistant around the house to her mother. The remains of

Elina were scattered all around the courtyard. Her father collected them into a bag and went to bury the daughter under bombardment.

There is a lot of such cases; it is impossible to tell them all at a time.

Now, the life in Samashki has somehow adjusted. Though in very constrained conditions, the elementary and the eight-year schools are operating. The hospital is functioning where the villagers can receive not only first aid and necessary out-patient treatment, but also hospitalization. The villagers themselves restored two mosques that offer classes of classical reading of the Koran.

As for the safety of people, there are too many questions here and almost no answer. Since 1999, in Samashki there are over thirty people recorded as stolen or missing. Infinite murders and abductions under the pretext of *cleaning* hold the villagers in constant fear. While the government for some reason sees the solution of the problem of safety in personnel rearrangement. As though it is panacea when the head of the administration is the object of such attacks! For example, in the winter of 2004, having learned that a false arrest of the villagers by unknown people in camouflage and masks was under way in Samashki, the former head of village administration, Sultan Sugaipov, with his bodyguards decided to prevent them; but they were met with automatic gun fire and a hail: *"Do not interfere!"* As a result, Sugaipov's hip was punched and the security guard had to be hospitalized urgently with heavy wounds. Sugaipov, for a long time was trying to find these soldiers guilty of many crimes, but the case was buried in the Office of Military Prosecutor. What order can we talk about when those who came to establish it continue to perform violations and escape without punishment?

Since March 1, 2004, S.Sugaipov was replaced by a young and vigorous Khizir Aldamov, native of Samashki. May God give him success, patience and resistance.

Samashki - Moscow.



Dosh #2(4)2004
Svetlana ALIEVA

THE RIGHT TO A NATIONALITY

No, I am not mistaken - I'd like to speak openly and seriously, at last, about the priority right of each person to a nationality. To reflect aloud without omissions dictated by current politics and the reserves defined by supreme ideological interests. We had more than enough of them during the years of Soviet history.

Besides, we were encouraged to consider national self-determination and even national consciousness as something unimportant, insignificant, minor, and moreover, hindering the country's social and economic development. It was established: first the Person and then his Nationality. But show me a Japanese, a Chinese, an Englishman or a Scot, an Irish, a Hindu or an Arab, a Zulu or a Maori, a Tatar or a Chechen (this line is intentionally unequal in the number of ethnic population or in social development), and all the others who would refuse their national name or would be ashamed of it. And we shall pay attention that the cult of Japanese national culture, with its ancient traditions and rituals, did not prevent the Japanese from becoming the avant garde of world scientific and technical economy. It is only left to ask such questions as: Who opposes national self-determination and consciousness? Why it is not recommended, to be exact? Why it is neglected to speak about the national policy, especially in a country so much covered with wounds by interethnic misunderstanding as our federation? It will also help to recollect that the countries on the planet Earth carry ethnic names except for such global hotels occupied by emigrants from all over the world as the United States of America or the United States of Brazil. And even their peoples are united in national communities and remember their nationality instead of citizenship.

Let's notice, by the way, that crimes are performed by a person and in this case the nationality does not play a role.

In the last decades, we argue especially a lot about human rights, dumping in one heap all that has been invented and thought up on this subject by the end of the XX century. And consequently, it appears, it is necessary to recollect that already in the XVIII century that universal equality of people was proclaimed as one of the purposes of struggle for the fair organization of world human community. However, social equality and the organization of a classless society were meant here but then, imperceptibly and gradually superseding the social and class category exclusively, the concept of equality was added with moral and intellectual characteristics by stating that all people are humans and men and women are equal.

The trap has worked, now it is perceived as a dogma: all are equal, or should be equal. We struggle for that, sparing no forces and lives, without asking any questions or thinking about it. And it would be good to think! Because equality is an utopian idea leading to the dead end of complete skepticism and disbelief in an opportunity of improvement of the life of a society and the person in this society created by him.

There is no equality and cannot be because a person is invariably and necessarily individual. We can find tons of biological, physiological, socially-psychological, economic, national, and other proofs to that. So, it is not necessary to make them all equal, as totalitarian systems in the XX century liked to practice. It is good that such equalizing was possible only during parades, when demonstrated were not

the riches and varieties of human community, but rather and equal lines of similarity of height, figures, clothes, or hair style. Many were amused by this similarity of thoughtlessness and some people are still being amused. Thanks God, the number of those is growing who see that in these similar constructions there are zombies, puppets operated from the outside with whom it will be impossible to build a normal human society.

So, let's agree that the concept of equality in application to the person is a dangerous error, and utopian idea that has led people to a dead end. And let's refuse it by replacing it with a more exact and essential - **EQUALITY IN RIGHTS.**

In other words, it is a question of protection of the right of each person to equal conditions of ability to live in a society. Isn't it so? And which right comes here to the foreground? In my opinion, and according to my belief, it is the right of everyone to respect and recognition of national dignity, irrespective of the place of residence, the social and economic status, or the traditional occupation.

I do not know what you feel, but I am always offended every time I hear cheap humor build around the demonstration of accents, be it Chukot, Caucasian, Asian, European, etc., or when I hear jokes where a Chukcha, a Caucasian, a German, a Jew, an Armenian, etc. is derided. Usually, national features are treated in such jokes as an idiocy, nonsense, or dullness of the represented object, and, unfortunately, it causes genuine idiotic laughter in the audience. It is a self-satisfying laughter. Look, there are fools out there, unlike us who understand humor and who are smart. In fact, this ostensibly innocent laughter expresses neglect to representatives of the people who is guilty only because he speaks with an accent your language that is alien for him, that he is not similar to you and dares to live its own way.

I don't think I'd be mistaken if I name the founder of such a genre and type of that attitude, the one who sorted peoples and religions along a hierarchy of importance: Nation - People - Nationality - National minority - Ethnic group. In our country in the XX century, godlessness has affirmed officially, but moreover, there also privately existed a hierarchical order of creeds - Orthodoxy, Old believers, Catholicism, Christian sects, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.

Our multinational and multiconfessional country, while annoyingly showing to the world equality and a brotherhood of all peoples, installed such an officially legalized ladder with a pure pragmatic purpose - to conveniently manage the polyethnic community. Thus, such a cynical fabrication played a vital, moreover - a fatal role in the distribution of rights and also in the formation of moral attitude of the same people, to be more exact - ethnoses. We shall also note that in our big country there lived people-ethnoses who did not get here from all over the world but they were indigenous peoples with their territories that made the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, according to the legalized hierarchy, the Supreme authority, even if it observed (even nominally) the rights of the Nation, it didn't remember about the rights of Peoples, Nationalities, and especially National minorities and any Ethnic groups while exploiting the territories that belonged to them with the terrestrial and underground rich-

es. The owners of all these territories were treated depending on the demands of the interests of the state policy under a new leader. The authorities played with them like a child plays with his toys: moved and deported the entire Peoples from mountains into deserts and from deserts to northern tundra, deleted their names from the history of the country, even from printed books of the past, and even cancelled an objectionable, "bad" nationality whatsoever. To facilitate the realization of such plans, propaganda campaigns were organized to discredit the sentenced to isolation or practical destruction People-Ethnos.

Thus, arose, suddenly, out of nowhere, for no reason, bad and good Peoples, ones were uplifted, others plunged into fetid holes of censures and slander that came from above generated by the Supreme authority.

As a result, (not at someone's malicious will of a concrete person) the indestructible Union, a huge country, broke up, which caused a number of social, economic and political shocks in the life of all indigenous peoples, doomed to live in the state that did not observe the right of its citizens to a nationality, and carried out, as a matter of fact, an antinational national policy.

The disintegration of the multinational country, the successor of the Russian empire that existed for almost three centuries, should have taught the Supreme authority something. History itself taught it an example lesson of inevitable results of neglect of national dignity and the interests of peoples regardless of their number, of suppression of one people by others in the system of moral, political, social, and economic matters.

In the countries that appeared as a result of disintegration, before building all and any social and economic programs, it is necessary, in the name of preservation and development of the moral and spiritual heritage of the title people, to generate the concept of a national policy.

It was already done in the first half of the XX century in the former Russian colonies, the nowadays prospering Finland and Poland. Such a job is now being conducted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

However, the government of the Russian Federation persistently maintains fidelity to the antinational Stalin's national policy instead of hurrying with a basic revision of the concept and creating a new concept without which we are threatened with disintegration similar to the one of the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, it is necessary to ascertain that today in the Russian Federation the racist arrogance in relation to all Peoples, except for title People, is demonstrated more and more openly. And nobody wants to think that, by elevating the Russian ethnos to an inaccessible height, by attributing exclusiveness to it, by opposing it to other ethnos that live in the federation, we run into self-

blinding. We fail to see the destruction of old Russian cities and villages, a devastation of the Russian ethnic territory, the critical reduction of birth rate, the moral impoverishment that cannot be rescued with all the efforts of the Orthodox Church, and the obvious degeneration. One of especially graphic evidences of this decline are the blunt and spiteful attempts to make non-Russian ethnos responsible for all these social ulcers of the country, in other words, it is the fascization of once great Russian people.

There is no sense in searching for rescue in suppression of the Chechen Republic, which the Supreme authority, either blinded or self-interested, so persistently calls the struggle against presumably international terrorism (which it itself generated). And it is time to stop, at last, slandering the already unjustly discredited in the spirit of Stalin's propaganda, so-called *persons of Caucasian nationality*.

Opposing the Russian people to all its historically predetermined ethnic neighbors is pernicious for the country to the same extent as violent conquests of foreigners. The ten-year long war with the Chechens proves a self-destructive inconsistency of such a policy, for there is no force capable of conquering the People no matter how numerous it is. Even having remained in a critical minority, having obeyed externally, a small ethnos will retain its animosity towards the subjugator and in due time it will break out.

It is a shame even to speak about it, the imperial attitude to other peoples, except the title one, remained in the past, the world has refused it. Only Russia, vainly, ruining itself, clings to the decayed remnants of the former authority, enjoying the pride of state power based on violence instead of a genuine brotherly, voluntary, and contractual association. Though only under these conditions, the Russian Federation can become a truly integral and democratic state, which it does not appear in the opinion of the world community any more.

The rescue of the Russian ethnos-people is not in the imaginary superiority, but rather in the union with ethnos that by the historical right live on the same territory with the Russians; in the reliance on them, not a forceful, but a friendly and brotherly one; in the recognition of national dignity and

self-value; in the respect for their national name, language, customs, and beliefs; and consequently, in the change of a psychological atmosphere, the attitude of the society to any representative of any non-Russian nationality. A large-scale educational job, a clever, tactful propagation not of weaknesses but of good qualities of each ethnos is needed today. The establishment of equal rights of all peoples comprising the federation, without any hierarchical sorting, is needed. In other words, such a right to the name is needed when a foreigner will cease to be ashamed of his nationality and will proudly say: "*I am a Chechen, a Kalmyk, a Balkar, a Khakas, a Buriat, a Tuvinian, a Chukcha, a Tatar, a Bashkir, a Chuvash, an Udmurt,*" etc.

Only in this way, and not with forceful methods, will the Russian Federation save its territorial integrity. It should change its attitude to the ethnos that constitute its space, having removed the accumulated national insults; having truly induced all the peoples to feel themselves brothers and to stand to protect the borders of their native state. It is necessary to develop and introduce into the state policy a constant respectful attitude to national cultures, to the moral and spiritual treasury of all ethnos without exception. The common riches of the country are in them. And, if the Orthodox clergy (who have been too much engaged today in missionary propaganda) recognize the right of Moslems, Jews, and Buddhists, on an equal footing with the rights of its own flock, to participate in this process of educating a respectful understanding and attention to the spiritual choice of an ethnos, then it will be possible to recognize that the greatness of the Russian people is not an ungrounded claim.





Dosh #3(5)2004
Israpil SHOYKHALOV

It is August again, and again I go to my native land. A lot has changed since I took the same train on the same hot August day from Moscow to Grozny. It's been eight years. People became different, their destinies too, and some were changed by their destiny. No matter what changed, my memory still preserves the image of Asya, a fellow traveler who was there on that train on a hot August day - two wars back.

It was the year 1996. We, my younger brother, the mother and I, had a chance to come to Moscow to visit our relatives. We stayed with them for a few months as refugees. On August 4, we bought tickets for that ill-fated train 87/88 that, as it turned out later, was doomed not to reach its final destination.

At the Kazansky railway station, there was the usual crowd. And, as always, there were a lot of Chechens on the platform, more seeing off rather than leaving. Looking at these elegant, well-groomed women and men, nobody would even fancy that a bloody war was raging on their native land for a second year.

We loaded our simple luggage into the train car and began to wait until those few final minutes before departure end - a tiny period of time that for some reason always seems extremely long, almost infinite.

Having nothing to do, I was examining the crowd. My sight caught two women who both seemed Russian to me. An absolute indifference to everything and a strange detachment distinguished them from others. The senior, a fat woman of about sixty, with snow-white hair, apparently, was the mother of the younger. The young lady of about thirty five was certainly not a child. However, she looked uncertain, timid as a teenager. Most certain, I wouldn't have paid attention to these two, had it not been the expression of absence on their faces, which was not so easy to notice, and the old-fashioned style of their clothes, which immediately caught the eye with extravagance. It was hard not to look back at them.

Two thirty-year old men were seeing off these strange passengers. One of them, a fiery brunet, spoke Russian without a slightest accent and the other was obviously a Slav. They loaded several bulky, heavy boxes into the car and, having said to the departing ladies a very warm goodbye in a typical Chechen style, kept standing on the platform until the train took off.

Now the platform floated back, the people who were sadly waiving goodbye to us disappeared, and Moscow was left behind - a full, safe city, with golden church domes and new buildings sparkling with glass. All this at once became the past; the euphoria of departure went away, and the passengers took to their compartments. Ahead of us was the destroyed, crushed, choking in dust - but nevertheless beloved - and, the most important, native Grozny.

Those two women turned up in the neighboring compartment. As usual, the passengers started to set the bed on the shelves and making new acquaintances, of course. While my brother and I were busy with mattresses and blankets, the mother had the time to make acquaintance of one of our fellow travelers, Raisa. She had visited her son and was now going back home in the village of Aldy. She also spoke with Rosa, that fat woman. It turned out she was going home from St.-Petersburg with her daughter, Angela. Mother told that she was going home too, together with the sons. Rosa answered with a sigh that Angela was her only child. Those two guys who were seeing them off were simply good old friends. One of them was Armenian and the other was Russian; they both were born and grew up in Grozny. Rosa has been friends with their families for a long time and remembered them both when they were babies. The damned war forced them out and former neighbors scattered all over the country; the entire former life scattered, just like splinters of the bombs that ruined their peaceful dwellings. The women spoke about their own, and there was a common topic - about how beautiful used to be our city and how hard it was now

there, about men taken away and people disappearing and that nobody cared about it.

"I thought they were your sons seeing you off," - my mother said to Rosa.

"I do not have sons," - she uttered and her voice trembled. "I'd rather go to my compartment and lie down."

When she left, Raisa told us that she also took her for a Russian because she spoke Russian so correctly, an uncommon thing with people of her age!

The train carried us farther and farther away all from the scurry and the scramble of Moscow life, and we were learning more and more about each other in the meantime. What else would you do in August heat under the knock of wheels running on rails, if not chatter?

Rosa's daughter (though according to her mother and her passport she was called Angela), introduced herself to us as simply Asya. The longer we talked with her, the lovelier she seemed to us. What a rare combination of erudition, decency, and sincere cleanliness next to children's naivety that is considered practically non-existent nowadays. Asya told us that she lived in St.-Petersburg with her mother for more than a year. They lived in a hostel. She studies to be a doctor, had an internship and worked at a big clinic under the direction of well-known professor.

It was amusing when she described how she was surprised with the car of those guys who had brought them up to the station. As Asya expressed it, for the first time in her life she had been in a 'non-Soviet' car. With such a genuine surprise, such a non-envious enthusiasm, she was describing to us the charm of that foreign car, the name and make of which was not even known to her. That had it not been for her pure, correct literary speech, it would be easy to take her for a collective farmer from a distant village. Her childish naive eyes were shining and we couldn't help admiring this charming frankness of hers. She emerged as though she was from another century, transferred into our train from the memorable novel *Asya* that we studied at school. The casual concurrence of names only emphasized the bewitching similarity with the gussy heroine of Turgenev's novel.

We continued our conversation on the second day of our journey, naturally. Now Asya was telling us about her work. Taking a great interest, magnanimous, she was obsessed with medicine. Obviously, it was not a casual choice but a true passion. Among other things, has told how once a serious patient was brought to their clinic who, according to the head physician, rambled all the time in a strange language. It turned out that it was the Chechen language. Asya volunteered to look after him, stayed near his bed even when it was not her shift, until the patient was transferred from reanimation to the regular ward. Two weeks later, she was told that a relative of hers wished to see her. She was surprised because she didn't have any relatives. At the entrance she saw that guy with a huge bouquet of roses and a big box of chocolates. By that time she already forgot their taste. All small pleasures of that sort she abandoned back there, in the pre-war Grozny.

Asya admired the marvelous city of St.-Petersburg (she pronounced this official city name so tenderly in an ancient manner that it seemed as if you could feel the historical atmosphere of that city) and told how in this magnificent city, among imperial palaces and all this indescribable beauty, she and her mother huddled in a small room of the hostel. The rent took half of Asya's scanty salary. But it didn't matter that much; they learned how to survive on the remaining half of her salary. I remember how especially tender she spoke about the Neva River. This blessed river crosses the city. Remember the stories about the blockade of Leningrad during the war? The river saved a lot of lives then. Asya explained that on her way to work she had to pass over one of the numerous bridges across the river. Teenagers, pensioners, and lots of other people come to catch fish from this bridge. In the evening, when she was going back from work, the people on the bridge were

selling the fish that they caught during the day. Cheap food! Probably because the fish obtained from the waters of the big city, strictly speaking, was not quite edible. But Asya spoke about it with gratitude. It was a great luck if they could fry that fish and eat it with a potato.

"It really saved us, otherwise we would probably starve to death," Asya-Angela admitted, and her girlish transparent eyes became sad with a non-childish look. And I also thought together with her: *"Thank you, fishermen, handymen, whoever you were! Keep catching fish and let it not run low, even if it is slightly poisoned by the big city!"* Perhaps, not only Angela and her mother owe it to this fish that they are still alive in modern democratic Russia.

When Asya was telling about her fish diet, one of the women from Asya's compartment sniffed:

"Don't make a poor mouth! Look at those huge boxes you've got, they take half of the compartment!"

Asya answered with children's laughter:

"Bless you! These are books!"

Indeed, the three enormous boxes that once contained imported goods were now full of books that these women were taking with them to Grozny! Nobody could expect such a thing. Having noticed our surprised, maybe, even astounded faces, Asya explained that she was afraid to leave them in St.-Petersburg because she needed them to finish her studies. The books were expensive and a hostel was a hostel - the books can be gone in no time in her absence.

I was admiring her. I was looking at such a crystal-clear person greedily, as they say, in four eyes. If it is true that everything in this world can be bought and sold, then where did this person come from? Dirty vanity is all around, people rush for money, and suddenly - such a miracle. It was unbelievable but I swear, everything what I am telling you here is plain truth. Not I alone was amazed: soon everybody in the car was speaking about this wonderful Angela and her mother.

In the evening, the women from the neighboring compartments gathered together, including my mother and those two. Chatter and laughter soon gave way to tears - someone started crying and told how a relative was taken away; another told about her two sons who were killed; yet another told a similar story. Suddenly Rosa, Asya's mother, began to shout violently, banging herself on the breast: *"Oh, my son!"* She obviously didn't feel well. The passengers surrounded them in confusion. Apparently, it wasn't the first time that Angela saw affect spasms of her mother. She put a bold face on and started to calm her down. The women forced Rosa to take a few pills and smell ammonium chloride.

The woman quickly came to her senses. And she started to tell. Angela tried to stop her for fear that the mother would feel bad again but Rosa was firm:

"I need to speak out, perhaps then I can feel better!"

We learned that Rosa managed a jewelers store in Grozny for over twenty years. She was a well-educated, intelligent, and successful lady.

She had two children, daughter Angela and a senior son. They lived near the jewelers store, not far from Lenin Square. They lived in a comfortable apartment in prosperity. Those two guys who saw them off at Kazan station were her son's close friends. The son grew up, served in the army and graduated from a law school. Later he graduated from another university. He did not drink or smoke. He was the master in the house; Rosa became a widow too early and took care of her children alone. Neither she nor her late husband had any close relatives; nobody survived: all died of cold and famine during the eviction in 1944.

That night of New Year's eve of December 31, 1994, was probably the most terrible night in their life. All the three of them, the mother and two children, were at home. A neat fur-tree was shining with colored lights in the corner. Nobody expected such a barbarous attack. The bombardment of Grozny started suddenly. They ran out of the house hurriedly. A bomb struck the house and the building was razed to the ground. Together with others who also lost everything in this disaster, they lived in a cellar of a neighboring house, freezing and starving for over three months. People, however, shared everything they had with others. Nobody made distinctions whether they were Chechens or Russians or anybody else. The most important goal was to survive. All together. One of those hard days, when there was a lull in fighting - no shelling and no bombardments, - someone from the inhabitants of their cellar found a carton of cigarettes in the neighboring house. For a smoking person, it was probably the dearest thing they could dream of. They divided the packs. Everyone got two packs of cigarettes. Rosa's son, as I already mentioned, did not smoke. He took his two packs and rushed to the exit.

When her story reached this place, tears started again pouring down from the woman's eyes:

"I asked him not to go!" He did not obey: *"Mom,"* he said, *"Why do you worry? I'll be quick. I'll run to the next cellar and be back in an instant. There is a friend out there who has been suffering without cigarettes. They are not animals, aren't they? I have no weapons on me, it is obvious, I am a peaceful person!"*

He left, about fifteen minutes later we heard a submachine gun burst.

The mother admitted distressfully: *"That sound still echoes inside me."* She forced herself to finish the story though those who were listening to her had seen quite enough over those years and they already knew what happened next:

"It was as though my heart fell down. I ran out to the street and there he was lying all in blood. Still warm. They killed him for no reason. Mercenaries shot him down."

There was a long silence. This woman, so big, corpulent, suddenly seemed very small to me, so heartbreakingly defenseless. She was all alone with her huge grief in which no human could help her any more. I, possibly just like everyone who was listening to her, was choking with an intolerable and hopeless pity. Tears came to my eyes, I could hardly hide them.

That day Rosa's hair turned snow-white instantly. With a sad smile, she pointed to her dress, that old-fashioned a dress that struck me when I first saw her. It was a present from her former neighbor in Grozny, the mother of that Armenian guy. Only it was a little short, so it was necessary to have it extended. She had a smart idea to use the flouncing from her school bows. And Angela's dress was also a gift from the same woman who used to wear it in her younger years.

It was the last day of our travel. Everybody dressed up getting ready for a joyful meeting with the native land and relatives. Angela gave her office telephone number to all the fellow travelers:

"Anything may happen. Perhaps somebody will travel to St.-Petersburg and fall sick? Then I can come and help."

It was August 6. We were already in Gudermes, a ten minutes stop, according to the schedule. Ten more minutes, and more... An hour passed and we didn't move anywhere - something definitely went wrong. All of a sudden shooting began. The train was surrounded by soldiers. The rumor came that Grozny was taken by rebels and we were surrounded by federal troops just in case, as a human shield. Three hours passed before the cannonade moved to Gudermes. People in the train started to panic. We heard the voice of L.Taramova over a portable radio set (she was then the station master in Grozny) shouting: *"Rescue the train! Take off immediately to Mozdok!"*

The train started to move carrying us back beyond the same stations that we had recently passed. Only now they were disappearing behind the windows rapidly, flashed almost imperceptibly. We rushed without stops not knowing any more where to and what for. Rosa cried and whispered to her daughter:

"What for did I bring you here? I wished to die on the native land. It looks now as if it cannot come true!"

While passing Ishcherskaya station, thanks to the wise advice of a train hostess, we used the emergency brake and jumped off the train while it was still moving. So did almost everyone, men in particular. We were afraid that in Mozdok all men would be taken to filtration camps.

The train vanished on the horizon, carrying away our hopes for peace and leaving us in uncertainty. Only three weeks later we managed to reach Grozny. On August 27, having crossed half of the city, we came home at last. Grozny met us with silence - the war ended. Never shall I forget this day. At the checkpoint at the entrance to the city, yesterday's enemies, rebels and federal soldiers, were sitting together smoking and laughing. They all did not seem to have a desire to look again at each other through the sights of their machine guns.

I did not see Asya any more. I could not learn anything neither about her nor about her mother. Their traces got lost. I tried to call the phone number that she gave to all the fellow travelers, but she couldn't be reached at that number any more. I dreamed to meet both of them in peaceful Grozny but, to our common misfortune, the war was under way there again. Where are you, my lovely fellow travelers?

And all of us - where are we?



Dosh #3(5)2004
Maria KATYSHEVA

THE WOMAN AND THE WAR

BIRLIANT RAMZAEVA'S TEMPLE OF LOVE, or Orpheus Descending

The night descended on the field of Borodino as if it threw a black wrap over a terrible picture of the finished battle. There was a strange silence. What a frightening and disturbing night. Now there ran a spark into the condensed darkness. It moved. Someone was searched for something in this darkness on the ground that was smashed by shells, among the broken guns, among corpses of people and horses. Who was it? The jackals of war - marauders, for whom, as is known, there is nothing sacred and the war is the mother? Or was it someone else? Who was it then?

It was a man and a woman. What did a young aristocrat, Margarita Tuchkova, who came here accompanied only by a servant, need in such a place at such an inopportune hour?

They were turning the bodies of victims. In the dim light of a lantern, she was looking closely into the faces that fell still under the mask of death. Where is it, where is the face that is so dear to Margarita, where is all that remained from the person who she loved so passionately? She must commit to earth the body of her husband according to the Christian tradition and not let wild animals and decay to disfigure him.

Later, on that place where General Tuchkov died, Margarita erected a chapel and herself departed from secular affairs for the aristocratic high life lost any meaning to her.

The heroic feat of one of the heroes of Borodino, General Tuchkov, remained in the military history of Russia as an example of personal courage, bravery, and selfless service to Fatherland. The act of his wife became the continuation of this feat, the final dramatic chord of a yet another melody of love.

This small temple, a monument of immortal love and not passing grief, has been standing on the field of Borodino for almost two hundred years. It makes human hearts beat even harder from admiration filling the souls with high feelings. It continues to inspire poets and artists for new creations.

World history knows quite a few remarkable examples of great human love of such kind. Centuries pass and such stories amaze our imagination by the beauty and the strength of feelings, the brilliant drama of passions, and the tragic circumstances. I chose the following story by analogy.

Almost two hundred years later, a modern aristocrat, a well-known actress and singer was wandering along the places of former battles, along the ruins of Chechnya from one burial place to another.

Birliant Ramzaeva was searching for the remains of her husband Makkal Sabdulaev who was a poet and, since 1996, worked as deputy minister of culture in

Chechnya. In the summer of 2000, he was arrested at a checkpoint and then disappeared without a trace.

Many of you may remember me as a correspondent of Voice of the Chechen Republic, the newspaper that used to be very critical towards the leadership of the Chechen Republic in the early 1990s. I expect that those who knew my journalistic position in those years will be surprised why I decided to write about Ramzaeva, the singer of that regime. About that very Ramzaeva who, back in 1993, came to the Square of Freedom with a small child on her hands and sang the songs that inspired the future resistance with such an expressive force what old men were wiping tears in their eyes and a massive meeting of people unanimously proclaimed the performer their national actress.

First of all, having survived through all these years and tribulations that were not only a torment but also sometimes a revelation to all of us, we now understand that, having divided in 1991 along political grounds, we became hostages not of the high politics as it looked to us back then, but rather of a primitive property dispute among influential individuals who were in power at that time. It is time to stop asking others where they were in August 1991 for a mere reason that we have already reaped the whirlwind that our masters had sown and these masters have for a long time been already occupying warm places; everyone of them has snatched to himself a share of a desired pie.

And second, any journalist, no matter whether he is apolitical or politicized, will be amazed with this woman's destiny that is noted by a deep dramatic nature that reflects the destiny of all women of Chechnya, irrespective of their political orientation, social status, and even national identity. If you are from Chechnya, then you are burnt and tempered by it. The temperature of fire can be different but the pain is the same for all.

A Croatian magazine published an article about the Chechen singer entitled *Medea from Grozny*. Why Medea? Birliant herself explained it: "*Instead of letting drunken soldiers scoff at my daughters, I'd rather kill them. May Allah not allow such a thing to happen! This is the reason why I ran away from there.*" I thought that Medea from Grozny might be a good heading for my publication as well. A Caucasian woman who came to a foreign land; A destiny blessed by a rare love; A constant sound of a tragic note in her destiny. Yes, there are similarities. But still, she is not Medea. Birliant Ramzaeva - with her melancholy and the pain of a lost but not dead love, with her bewitching songs - she is closer to singer Orpheus who descended to Aid, the Empire of the Dead. Unlike the mythical ancient singer who descended to a gloomy and

silent Aid, our contemporary singer had to face a monstrous hell with its circles of torture that got invigorated nowadays.

The war caught her in Grozny. Pressing her small daughter closer to herself, deafened by the sounds of explosions, shuddering from bomb attacks in the house where the windows scattered into splinters, the doors flew off and the roof fell right on the heads of the people who were hiding there. She for a long time resisted to believe that the president of Russia for whom, inspired by the ideas of democratic transformations, she so zealously had voted, could give the order to destroy her beloved city and her house.

Yet she had to believe in it.

If someone told her, a healthy woman, the mother of two children, that would lose an unborn child and had to undergo a complex operation not for any biological reason but because of a nervous and physical shock caused by the war, she would not believe it.

Yet she had to believe in it.

If someone told her that an envious hatred could fatally wound in the direct meaning of the word, she would probably doubt it as well. When, while being in a deep depression following the loss of her husband, she was shown a popular Russian newspaper, not a yellow but a political newspaper, where she was compellingly slandered, Birliant Ramzaeva had a micro heart attack.

Yet she had to believe in it.

Each woman in Chechnya anguished in those years. One lost her children; another lost her husband; the third turned into an exile; the fourth was subjected to desecration and vainly accused of nonexistent sins; the fifth fell seriously ill, etc. The war brought a lot of disasters. Some people got only a few while Birliant Ramzaeva had them in abundance and all at once, as if an Unknown Force selected them to punish for sins of all mankind. Or to test them?

Long ago, at a song contest that took place in Alma-Ata, the young Chechen singer won the first prize for the performance of *The Song about Grozny* written by a well-known composer Adnan Shakhbulatov. If someone told her then that the true face of war is the face of her native city fully destroyed, she wouldn't have believed it.

In 1996, after the calm brought by the Khasavyurt Treaty, having seen this face in its horrifying reality, having observed closely the terrible, heart-breaking features of it, she had to believe in it. She believed

and started singing an absolutely different song to the same music by Shakhbulatov:

*The fallen tragedy has blinded my city...
Look how you have been destroyed,
Caressed by courageous guys,
Decorated with charming girls
And laughing children,
My city that used to be friends with all...
Look how severely and cold-bloodedly you
have been tormented
With fatal weapons...*

Together with Makkal she drove along the broken streets trying to recollect what used to be there in those destroyed buildings before the war. In the car, she was listening to heroic songs of Imam Alimsultanov, a big friend of her family. Birliant felt how hatred towards the

istic. He understood that such a situation would not last forever and that timeless cultural heritage could not vanish. Folklore should be preserved contrary to the momentary party interests.

She would always remember what happened a few years later: A Russian Orthodox priest, her neighbor, just like Makkal Sabndulaev, refused to leave the city neither during the first, nor the second war. "God sent me to testify to this tragedy..." thus also spoke Makkal. People of high soul are identical everywhere. Later, in 2000, when she arrived in Grozny to find out the destiny of her husband, she came home and got into an ambush. She decided to hide at her neighbors' place, being absolutely confident that the priest and his wife would never betray her. She came to them through a hole in the fence,

broken and devastated, and found shelter and consolation for at least a few hours. In addition to all that she had gone through, she saw how her house was set on fire. In the morning she was supposed to leave Chechnya. She didn't want to do anything, only to cry, to howl from pain having buried the face in the ground. The priest and his wife somehow managed to shake her up a bit. They forced her to eat a plate of oatmeal. Before saying goodbye, they all knelt before the Orthodox icons and prayed. The priest told her to pray in her language. And she, a Muslim, stood behind him, an Orthodox priest, and prayed to Allah. God is one for all. When they parted, the priest gave her three candies, the only sweet things they had in the house, and asked her to give the candies to her daughters. It was,

however, still ahead.

She didn't notice even ruins in the place where her music school used to be, she saw only emptiness. It was a shock. Shaken, Birliant shared the bitter confusion with the husband. He always, all the thirteen years that they were together, understood her. This wonderful gift of mutual understanding was also feeding the creative cooperation of the poet and the singer. They felt the emotions of each other as if they had a common blood circulation system. But even then, when she, together with Makkal were looking into the face of the war reflected in the disfigured shape of the destroyed city; even then, when they were losing their friends one after another, (and among them such known people as Imam Alimsultanov and Dalkhan Khozhaev), Birliant could not imagine that she was yet to see the belly of war. Alone, without a friendly support, to descend to its very core; to reach the bottom of the



Russians burst and inflamed in her heart and, at the same time, she felt sympathy for the Russians. She felt hatred to those who destroyed her world - the world of beauty and music, love and poetry. She felt sympathy for those who lived near her, who shared her cares, who studied together with her in the musical school, who taught music to her, the only Chechen in class, and who helped master her natural musical and vocal talent. Pianist Maina Zakharovna Snitko... Viktor Nikolaevich Zemskov... It was him, her instructor, who advised the young schoolgirl, enthusiastic about classical music and Soviet songs, to switch to the Chechen folklore: "Your people lost a lot during the deportation. It is necessary to maintain and popularize national songs." He said it when everything ethnic-related was censored in the ideological department of the Communist Party committee and regarded as national-

glutton of war, in search of the remains of the person who was now sitting beside her in the car and sensitively responding to all the movements of her soul.

And yet she had to believe in it, for it now became the reality.

Orpheus hadn't seen such a hell...

One step another did the Chechen singer descend through its circles. Temporary burial places of the fighters of resistance... Hasty burials of federal soldiers... The record of the most monstrous crime of the war - burial places of children, women, and old people - the innocent victims of ambitious politicians who due to their unreasonable arrogance refused to talk with each other.

It only took a week of searches for the hair of that still young woman to turn gray from the horror that opened to her eyes. Something first cracked in her soul and then it died when it became clear that poet Makkal Sabdulaev was not alive any more. She got frozen. Petrified. Turned into ice.

A part of her soul died and then Birliant started singing again. The way the women in the mountains always used to sing in the times of heavy disasters. It is from this hopeless women's misery that *tijzhar*, those songs-lamentations, were born. Thus was born this unique and only song that the singer wrote herself, both words and music, completely her own, coming from the depths of the wounded human heart:

*I cry. I call: return to me, return!
From pain and misery my hair has turned grey.
I shall live, eulogizing your deeds
And observing your honor,
Surviving through all disasters...*

She started singing again. Through blood and tears.

Through Blood and Tears was the name of the first album recorded by Birliant Ramzaeva. It was recorded in Grozny that was destroyed after the first war, in the kitchen of Birliant and Makkal's house, to the barking of neighbor's dogs, to the crowing of the cocks, and periodic shooting. Then there were two more albums that were recorded already far away from the native land. Those were the songs born in experience, through all that she lived, what she saw and learned. Those were songs-lamentations of the woman singed by the war. Though they tell about a personal tragedy, they reach a high degree of generalizing force and grow up to heroic ballads, patriotic appeals of huge emotional scale.

Like a wolf, you resist the war, the proud Chechen... It is her Makkal, like the wolf from the legend - unlike in other cultures where the wolf is a symbol spiteful bloodthirstiness, in the Chechen folklore,

the wolf symbolizes nobleness and courage. All the animals got scared and hid from a wild killing wind, and only the wolf remained where he was, he leaned against a rock and alone resisted to hurricane. He didn't leave even when the crazy storm tore off all his skin from the nose down to the tail. Such was Makkal. He did not leave Grozny during the war. The writer decided to experience everything with his own skin - to see with his own eyes; to record the sensations of the eyewitness and not a detached onlooker. He wished to share everything with his native land. But hurricane swept him away...

Whether willing or unwilling, Birliant continued what he could not complete. She became a herald carrying to the world the story about a small country in the mountains, about its torments and hopes.

Neither earlier nor now, Birliant would agree to cater the low tastes and avoided superficial and empty texts. She was still convinced that the song, the music should educate, wake up the best feelings in the person, and make him think.

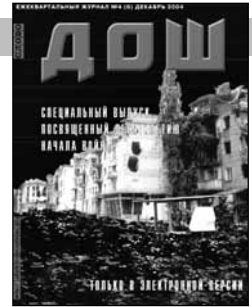
Another turn occurred in the destiny of the singer, in the possibility of which she also refused to believe before. Charmed by Chechen springs and mountains, fostered in the bowels of national spirituality, the performer of folklore songs refused to believe that she would find a grateful listener, would become recognized, and, moreover, become in demand outside of her native land. And yet she had to believe in it. She went to sing in Europe. London applauded the Chechen singer, who the first representative of the Vainakh people to have an opportunity to give two solo concerts in the British capital. She was invited to Croatia to participate in the musical performance of Euripides' play *Medea*. The strange guest - the Caucasian Woman - was speaking and singing in the Chechen language. At first, the audience could not understand why after *Medea's* lines that were spoken in the language familiar to them, the answer followed in a completely strange language. The people laughed, perceiving it as a joke of the play director. Everything became clear to them a minute later. The Caucasian Woman was the personification of a tragic destiny of all women of a small country in the mountains. A clean, silvery as the mountain key that originates at a glacier, melodious voice with vibrations is capable to tell more than words. No translation is necessary. The audience understood that through the personal pain the singer transmits the pain of the wounded Chechnya, of the entire Chechnya. While listening to this small woman in black clothes, the people in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia cry and do not restrain their tears - they know and understand too well the sufferings of the far away Vainakh land.

Birliant says: *"The situation in today's world is difficult. I really wish that people stop killing each other and start speaking the language of music - the most clear and the most accessible to all. I would like that all people, irrespective of their nationality, faith and the color of skin, could communicate in the language of music and appreciate each other, for in this space we are only temporary visitors and should not be looking for an enemy in the neighbor. I forgive everyone who offended me. Anyway, we shall all go from hence to the other world, no matter how hard we would cling to this life, no matter how strong we would want all this money, and no matter how painfully we would aspire to wound the hearts of each other. The nature itself lets us know that the human breed is facing a great trouble. It is time for us, artists, to join hands and try to do something before these obscurants who wage conflicts that are destroying the world kill all of us. They set people against each other today and we give in to it. When they say that culture is beyond politics, it is a lie. Art workers, if they are not corrupt, not hunters for easy money or schlockmeisters, if they are true carriers of spirituality, have the power to influence their rulers. It is the truth. Culture can do a lot. Some people say they do not participate in politics. Nothing of the sort! Whether you want it or not, all the same you participate in it, if you are able to influence the minds and souls of people with your creative work."*

"All wars, irrespective of their names, Civil or criminal, have one essence: they destroy, kill, they take away instead of giving rise to sons, they destroy instead of building temples. But all the wars cannot kill love that is simple, terrestrial, human, and all-powerful. Because from it, through blood and tears, a temple makes its way and sons come to the world."

Orpheus met only the shadow of his beloved Eurydice in the underground world. The story of this unfading love is alive in the memory of mankind for centuries. The Chechen singer Birliant Ramzaeva, having passed through all circles of hell, did not find the mortal remains of her husband. The war took away their unborn son. She could not build either a chapel or a tombstone above the grave of her beloved husband. Yet she managed to erect a temple: her songs that reflect the history of the modern Chechnya, with all its pain, sufferings and hopes. One of her recorded three albums entirely consists of songs written to the verses of Makkal Sabdulaev. It is the most shrilling, the most tremendous chord of yet another melody of a big love.

A NEW YEAR IN THE CITY OF TEARS. TEN YEARS LATER



Dosh #4(6)2004
Israpil SHOVKHALOV



*It's been a long time since we have forgotten those peaceful dreams
That used to be lullabies to the soul amidst the blinking stars!
The golden glow of the Moon is not for us -
The sky above Grozny is covered with black fumes...*

It was a frosty December morning. The first snow was falling down. It was falling slowly and for a long time wrapping up the first wounds of the Chechen land with its fluffy cover. Everything was sparkling dazzling white all around and the winter sun was playing with its beams so joyfully as if enticing to play snowballs with it or make a snowman. For some reason, one could not hear hubbub and laughter of children that is habitual in this season and in such weather. Nothing could be heard, even primitive human voices, nothing at all, except the rumble of military planes. Our village froze up as though its inhabitants fell asleep having a terrible dream and cannot wake up. The truth is that nobody could sleep at night in those days. They couldn't sleep for quite a long time: this sunny morning was the beginning of the eleventh day since December 11, 1994. They started to count the days in a new fashion: it was not simply December 22, it was the eleventh day. The well-known Decree of President of the Russian Federation B.N.Yeltsin on December 9, 1994 proclaimed: *"All means available to the state shall be used to maintain state security, legality, the rights and freedoms of citizens, to protect public order, struggle against criminality, and to disarm all illegal armed formations."* This Decree and the introduction of troops on the territory of the Chechen Republic that followed on December 11, 1994, marked transition to a new readout of time for all Chechens, Ingushs, Russians, and other citizens of the Russian Federations living in that territory.

So, there came the eleventh day of the war. Though the officially declared purpose of the introduction of Russian troops to the Chechen Republic was *'restoration of constitutional order and disarmament of illegal formations'* in the republic, the plans of the Russian military command, as it very soon became clear to all, were primarily aimed to take Grozny, the capital of the Chechen Republic. Therefore, the command was reluctant to distract big forces to establish the *'constitutional order'* in other parts of the republic, so there appeared zones with a *'neither peace, nor war'* regime on the wings of the deployed armies. Our village in the suburbs of Grozny remained one of such zones for many months.

There were neither factories, nor any strategically important sites that could possibly draw attention of the military. Around were only fruit gardens. Tersky Ridge was

not far away and you could clearly see it. When I was a child, I used to run there to collect wild strawberry and mulberry. Now there were tanks and heavy artillery of the Russian armies on this ridge. From time to time they were *'adjusting fire,'* aiming at the villages to the West of Grozny and the city, too.

Only grandfather, mother and I remained in the house. We took all the women and children to a mountainous village of Alkhazurovo where our relatives lived whom neither I, nor my parents ever saw. Sometime in November, the atmosphere in Grozny became nervous, though the war was not officially started until December 11. Despite protests of the mother and the discontent of the father, I persistently continued to attend classes at the university. But in November it was closed *"in connection with the difficult situation"* in the republic. It all started when planes of *unidentified origin* destroyed the Northern airport with bombs. On November 26, *tanks of opposition* stormed D.Dudaev's Presidential palace. There were a lot of other things of *unidentified origin* and difficult to explain happening in Grozny and in other areas of the republic.

Now all this seems to me children's war games - the real war was still ahead.

Above the city, at extremely low height, MIG and Sukhoi fighters were flying like birds. There was a continuous rumble of heavy bombers in the sky. I couldn't believe that it all was happening here, in my native city. Unfortunately, it was not a dream.

On December 22, the eleventh day of the war, the parents and I decided to go to see our *'refugees'* - my sisters with children. What a risky adventure. But it was the second month as we *evacuated* them and we missed them. Besides, we were taking food for them - they needed something to eat.

We took off very early, while everything was still quiet. The city looked deserted, there were very few cars in the streets, and the mini-markets along the Staropromyslovsky highway were almost deserted. One could feel a burdensome pressure in the air. I was sitting in the back seat of the car and thinking: *"Will there really be a war?"* I remember when we reached the city center, we were surprised that the public telephone station in Pervomaiskaya Street was still working. I am describing these details so that the reader could feel the real conditions that were in Grozny at the beginnings of the war of 1994. We stopped and I went to call the brother in Moscow. It seemed to be against the nature to see the usually overcrowded hall of the telephone station absolutely empty. I asked the operator whether there the telephone connection worked. She responded affirmative. I dialed the number and, strangely enough, the call got through. It seemed to me as if I was



back in the peaceful Grozny of old days. The reality was that the city enjoyed its last pre-war minutes.

I assured the brother that we were alive and healthy, but I also warned him not to go back home. And this moment, the rumble of a plane literally cut the sky above Grozny in halves. Then a terrible explosion followed from which huge windowpanes in the telephone station fell down and the walls shuddered. I was deafened. Never before did I hear an explosion of an air bomb. I didn't have a slightest idea what it could be. Now it was close! I cried into the phone that they started to bomb us, but the brother on the other end of the wire was perplexed and did not believe his ears: *"How can they bomb you? Are you crazy?"*

I rushed to the street. The telephone operator was also running out together with me. She was a fifty-year old Armenian. She shouted to me:

"Run to the bomb shelter - it is very close from here!"

But I ran to our car - the mother and the grandfather were alive and healthy. The bomb fell a few blocks away from where we were, on the Music School.

A few people caught by the bombardment were running along the streets keeping close to the buildings. There were also people with weapons. They were civil guardsmen armed with automatic guns or even with hunting guns. We moved on having turned to the right near the House of Pioneers. Lenin Square opened before our eyes: a beautiful fir-tree was standing there in proud loneliness now useless to nobody.

We crossed the bridge over the Sunzha River and saw that people stop their cars and jump out of them almost on the move; fall prone on the ground trying to hide from a new air bombing of the downtown, already the second for this half an hour.

We got into a roadside snowdrift - the car slipped, roaring as a plane. My father suffers from a chronic illness: the blood vessels of the brain are narrowing and he shouldn't get nervous. In excitement, he mixed the brake and the accelerator and instead of the brake he kept pressing the accelerator. We somehow got out of the car and also lay down on the snow. It was both scary and ridiculous. Scary because the war was undoubtedly already outside and we laughed looking at how clumsy

people behave in such extreme circumstances. I looked ridiculous even to myself.

The building of the Music School was burning. Everyone shouted that several women were killed near the Flower market next to the building. There came a desperate cry of a woman following the first shouts - someone shouted that an American journalist was killed during the air assault. Many years later, the Chechens gave her name to the area where she was killed.

We passed through Minutka Square into the village of Michurin where we had many



relatives. The house of all at them had huge locks on the doors - the people were hiding in the bomb shelter. Then we decided to drive back. Above the center of Grozny we could see clouds of smoke and we hoped to take a detour to reach our place. But directly in front of us, about five hundred meters ahead, the planes destroyed with bombs the crossroads together with the market and the people trading there. We had to stop. Several cars nearby were burning with people inside! There was the smell of burning human meat in the air. There were lots of darkened blood stains on the first white snow. There were even pools of blood in some places. The mother burst into tears; tears flew from the eyes at everyone who was there - women and men were crying, not being shy of each other. As it turned out, it was only the first *take* in a series thriller of the Chechen war.

The father got a coronary event and he ceased to realize where we were though he drove these roads all his life. I almost didn't know how to drive a car but I couldn't think of such trifles under the circumstances. I got out of the car and calmed the parents. Then I went to ask someone for directions. When I

approached the crowd I stiffened from what I saw - there were broken off and disfigured bodies all over the place. It was awful! Among others there was a corpse without a head - subsequently it was discovered that it was the father of a guy who studied together with me at school. He was identified due to the passport in a pocket, and the head was never found. In a pool of blood, there were fragments of bodies of four or five teenagers of ten or twelve years of age - they were buying something at the market. I saw several female bodies nearby. My almost fainted from what I saw. Then I ran back to the car, pressed down the accelerator as hard as I could and drove away from this cursed place as fast as I could, though never before had I driven the car in the city.

Our village looked deserted - almost all women and children had been taken away earlier and only people of old age and a few little one stayed. All our neighbors gathered together in our cellar. It was small but with thick concrete walls. If anyone knew that thing would go this way, he would probably make the walls even thicker. It felt easier when were sitting there all together. Everyone was telling about what they had heard. There were many rumors, now whether you wanted or not you had to believe even in the most improbable things.

The military were liberating us fingers to the bone: so were striving so hard that they liberated us from light, from gas, from property, from habitation, from all daily cares, and many even from a life, too. It seemed they were going to continue their liberation efforts.

Fortunately, we had our water supply delivered to us and we had enough water for a month. Those who held cattle were getting water by melting the snow on a fire.

I remember how I flatly refused the first time to go down into the cellar - it somehow seemed a shame to me, hardly having heard the rumble of a plane, to run there. Besides, I moved two sofas beside each other in the room and covered them with a thick sheet of plywood. Sleeping under this roof on the floor, I fancied that splinters of bombs or a shell would not punch my personal *'bomb shelter'*. What a naive fool I was then!

Now it was the morning of the twelfth day of the war. New snowdrifts appeared in the street. The mother mixed more dough than she did usually. Zabo, our neighbor come in and

was surprised at how much dough there was - who would eat it? But the mother replied that women were not in every house and she would distribute it among the neighbors.

We were sitting in the kitchen and recollected all the good things that happened to us in the past life. Suddenly we heard a whistle and then a terrible explosion deafened us. The blast wave swung the kitchen window open inside, having broken the latches, as though a huge invisible monster rushed into the dwelling. Splinters of glass were coming at us. I jumped, seized the mother and neighbor Zabo, and dragged them away from here. Fortunately, no one was hurt. We run out into the courtyard. The grandfather and several other men from the neighboring houses were running towards us from the street and violently shouted, urging us to run into the cellar. The military fired a shell from the Tersky Ridge and it got into the neighboring house. Completely out of breath, we finally reached our bomb shelter. The heart was beat wildly: they were no more shooting at someone else but straight at us. For the first time in my life I felt that I was a target. Believe me, it is very scary. One question was incessantly drilling my brain: What for they were firing at our peaceful village? Before I could find an answer, more planes-murderers suddenly came. Two women died in the neighboring cellar - their sick hearts could not withstand the heart-breaking roar of these infernal machines.

Each shell and each bomb carried death and destructions. They were killing in our souls our common Soviet past, making enemies out of the citizens of a former great and mighty country. It was awful! We, Chechens, Russian, Ingushs, Armenians, Ukrainians, and peoples of many other nationalities, lived for many years together in one common state. We survived through a lot together and now began to hate each other more than the real enemies so that we started a war against each other!

In the Soviet Union, I went through all the steps typical of any Soviet child: Octobers, Pioneer, Komsomol. I was even secretary of the Komsomol organization at school. Then I served in the army. In that very army that now did not protect us from enemies, as our commanders used to teach us, but acted rather on the contrary. Bombs were falling more frequently like hail and bombers were flying so low that it seemed they would touch the roofs of our houses. The earth shuddered from explosions. We spent all this day hiding in the cellar. I later realized that I kept holding my mother's hand the whole day, trying to calm her. Only in the evening I suddenly noticed that her fingers were still mucky dough that already dried on her hands. The mother looked at me and said:

"I didn't have the time to bake the dough."

The long days of the war were passing by. Each day seemed to me longer than any of the peaceful years before. I remember when I went

to school we studied the Great Patriotic War at History lessons. I then did not realize at all what it meant - over twenty millions victims! And the blockade of Leningrad! Only now I fully understood what was happening then.

Strangely enough, humans get used to all. Having reconciled with the fact of the war, after each bombardment we habitually left the cellars and ran to the neighbors to check if there were any killed or wounded.

It seemed strange that people forgot about food during the first days of the war, there was no appetite whatsoever. Only later people tried to eat something only to sustain and survive.

It seemed strange to write the address on the hand wrist every day, but how could it be otherwise? A sniper or a splinter of a bomb could suddenly hit you and will be among hundreds or even thousands of unidentified anonymous corpses in the streets of Grozny. With the address written, there was a chance for your corpse to be picked up and delivered to your relatives or they could send a note to this address. Though all this is just frenzy, in fact almost all of the addresses these days remained without the addressees.

Death was everywhere now. It seemed as if it settled among us and nobody paid attention to it any more. There were so many victims that women even ran out of tears. Every next victim of this senseless to anybody, except for the authorities, and unreasonable war was buried as silently as possible and where it was available.

The days on the eve of the New Year were far from being the usual holiday preparations. Air strikes and shelling did not stop. There was a rumor that there were victims in the village of Alkhazurovo where our refugees stayed. We, several families who had sent the relatives to this village in the mountains, decided to get there at any cost, even on foot. It was on the verge of madness: the mad war forced people to undertake mad actions.

When it calmed we left the city, or rather, the remains of it. The life here was dying away with each day, with each hour. It was extinguished and terminated with precision guided rockets and with air assaults. It was strangled with tanks, shells, storm of fire from every possible weapon, etc. My city was dying before my eyes and together with it something was dying in me.

The closer we moved to the center of Grozny, the more horrifying it looked. It was a real hell! Our beloved city became totally unrecognizable over two or three weeks. It was strange to see on a gate or sometimes on undestroyed houses a hurriedly made inscription: *People live here!* As though before it was animals or aliens and not people who lived in these houses.

Corpses and fragments of human bodies were scattered everywhere. If a man-made hell was ever possible on Earth, it was undoubtedly here!

Among lifeless bodies and enormous air bomb craters, in the same place in downtown, in Lenin Square, there was the fallen fir-tree that was dying together with the destroyed Grozny.

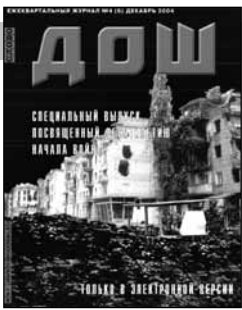
We managed to get to Alkhazurovo by miracle. Our family, jammed together in a cel-



lar of the neighbor's house, met the New Year 1995 with a unanimous cry of women and children accompanied by explosions of bombs and the rumble of planes. In Russia, people were joyfully celebrating and drinking champagne, while here the assault on the city of Grozny was under way. People make traditional New Year resolutions; now all of us in the cellar- children and adults - had a common desire for this nightmare to end as soon as possible and for this absurd and terrible massacre to stop.

Ten years have passed since then. I am standing again near a New Year tree in my native and beloved Grozny. We have both changed over these years: you, my city, have lost many of those who loved you so strongly, and I have, too. You grew older from all this and I my hair turned gray. The tragedy left its marks on the both of us. Let's make a New Year together today. Let's hope that our common wish comes true.

A Happy New Year 2005 to you, my Grozny! May God give you peace and prosperity, my beloved city!



DOSH #4(6) 2004

Tina BRUXELLES

SOLIT

I received a letter from Chechnya. From my mother...

...A very long time ago, when I was seven years old, I was sick with measles. Nothing hurt me, but all days long I was staying in bed in a room where the windows covered with red fabric, and I was feeling lonely. My mother said that when you are sick with measles everything around should be of red because this color helped to recover quicker. Every morning the red sun played with its red beams on the red wall above my bed. Mysterious figures on the carpet turned into strange animals, flowers and fantastic towers where unfortunate princesses were kept in prison, just as lonely as I was...

When the mother was coming back from work, my melancholy left me and I tried to retell her all the stories that had happened on the carpet. But I did not have enough words to do it, so I had to obediently swallow the so much despicable cod-liver oil. And the mother was telling me the fairy tales of her own.

Later they sent me sent to a children's sanatorium for recovery of the weakened health. The sanatorium was probably a good one and, therefore, there were predominantly Russian children. Certainly, they did not like us, and when five little Chechens got their hair cut very short 'to prevent lice', we became a good object of sneers...

I clearly remember that day. It was cool day. On the bench where I was sitting, the sun tenderly heated my lean shoulders and its warmth brightened up my childish loneliness a little. To my big displeasure, a mother with a daughter sat opposite me, it was the meanest girl from our group. It was a day when visitors were allowed and the fat mother began to get gifts out of her big brown bag and treated them to her child. There was so much arrogance and hostility directed at me in the eyes of the mother and the daughter. I could not remove my eyes from a cake that was quickly disappearing in the mouth of this disgusting girl...

"*Why didn't you come to meet us?*" It was my mother standing in front of me, she always appeared when I was in dire straights. Meanwhile, the father was taking out packages, and the bag with cakes was certainly among them, from a brand new celestial-blue *Moskvich*.

It was intolerable for the two devourers of the contents of the brown bag to observe my happiness and when I took out a piece of a chocolate biscuit with a huge layer of cream they could no longer sustain: they took away their pitiful scraps, sat in a red *Zaporozhets*, and drove off with a terrible rumbling noise.

Sometimes it seems to me that the war started because of this...

"...You write that you came back home and for a long time could not find the key from the gate that was in the pocket. Was it really necessary to search

for the key? In fact, it was possible to get into the courtyard and then into the house through the breach that gaped in the middle of the building. But for the gate not to feel its uselessness, you all the same unlocked it and then closed it again..."

...When the father was building the house, the mother interfered with process in every possible way. She insisted that the window in the bedroom should look where she wanted and the kitchen was built so large that the father was perplexed; was she going to cook or to dance in it? Disputes always ended in the same manner: the father agreed with the mother's suggestions and relieved his heart by cursing Stalin: 'If that bastard had not banished us to Siberia, we would not have appeared there in the same village and I would never have met this woman!'

Sometimes the mother left for Moscow with her girlfriend to do shopping. It usually took her ten days. Those were the hardest days for the father and me! We felt so much pity for each other. He was feeding me with cakes and I made tea for him all the time!

In the evening on the eve of the mother's return, we always went to bed as early as possible so that the night could pass quicker together with our loneliness...

"...You write that among the burnt stuff you found a porcelain horse, almost unbroken, only gilding from the mane and the hoofs peeled off. There used to be two of them, they always stood on a big beautiful closet that was called 'Helga'. Now this sad figure that turned yellow from fire and loneliness reminds you of those times when there was the city, there was the street, there was the house, and there was the kitchen where you could dance..."

When Zargan, the wife of my uncle Data, came to us, the wonderful smell of slightly burnt flour filled the - she and the mother started to bake *chepalgash* and *khingalsh*. Having sopped each flat cake in hot water, they greased them with melted butter and put into a wide dish, then covered this fragrant mountain with a big Chinese enameled cup with exotic parrots on blossoming branches painted on it. And intimidated us children, declaring that it was necessary to carry all this to the market place and sell...

And if Maret, the sister of my father, also came, she took the red accordion and sang a very sad song about the mother who did not let her daughter go fetch the water. Certainly, after this sad song she only played cheerful music and the father always danced with Zargan and then with Maret who was skillfully spinning with the accordion.

Aunt Lena, an old woman, lived behind the fence. She had a small shaggy dog Tanya who terribly barked but actually was very cowardly. Tanya always had cold feet

RUDE

when seeing our red cat who for some reason liked to sleep on the roof of their house near the chimney.

Aunt Lena always said that she always envied us because our family was big and she didn't have anybody and she was very lonely. She asked my father to take care of her when she died. The father did so: he paid to the city church so that they could bury her according to the Christian ritual. It turned out only after her death that she had many sisters and nephews living all over Russia and one sister lived even in America. All of them came here and for a long time were partitioning the old house terribly scaring the deserted Tanya.

"...Ah, what a pity that our peach tree dried up! You are right, mom, nowhere in the world - neither in Asia, nor in Europe - did I eat such sweet-smelling fruits, only in our orchard! You just take a bite of a yellow-red velvet peach and an amber squirt of sweet juice starts running down the hand and it is necessary to lick it off immediately before it pours under the sleeve..."

"You write that the trees which escaped shooting and shelling die of loneliness, grieving about their disappeared owners..."

...In May, the cherry trees in our street were all in blossom. It was my seventeenth birthday and the first day of a big disappointment. I was coming back home. The spring wind was tearing off white petals from branches and they stuck to my wet face. My solitude was as infinite as this white color scattered all over the planet. And suddenly, when our house appeared ahead at the end of the street, I saw the mother. She swept away the cherry petals mixed with the leaves broken by the wind and this part of the street in front of the house seemed to me the only little island in this world where I would never feel lonely or unhappy...

"...You write how you came in and looking at our walls recollected your dreams that you had before the war. Now you know it, what those dreams meant, but could we really imagine back then that such a sorrow would come into our lives, that there would be no house, there would be no street, there would be no city, and there would be no dreams any more... That the trees would die, the grass would die, and the birds would forget the way to here..."

Could we really imagine back then that our land would be poured with blood, that the woods would be destroyed with fire and the fields would become covered with tombstones?

"...The big country had a big holiday. Handsome men and beautiful women were congratulating each other and wishing happiness. The beautiful snow softly covered beautiful houses and streets of the beautiful city. And suddenly, a sobbing woman appeared in this city. Her clothes were torn up to pieces, her hair was wild, and she was stepping on the frosted ground barefoot. With her thin hands the woman pressed a lifeless body of the baby to her breast. Two other kids were holding on to the lap of her dress and crying too. But the hap-



py people of the happy city did not wish to sadden the holiday and did not notice the unfortunate woman and her children. They turned away, crossed over to the other side of the street, and they stopped up their ears and screwed up their eyes. Having come into the houses, they firmly closed the doors, lowered the curtains, and turned on loud and cheerful music..."

...I woke up from cold - I forgot to close the window. A blow of wind, the master of this area, dropped the mother's letter from the table... I had a dream about Chechnya...

"Mother, my dear mother! We are so scattered now around this world! I cannot huddle up to you and banish away your sorrow like you always used to do it with my childhood loneliness!"

"We are so far away from each other and so lonely on this huge cold planet. And I cannot change anything!"

"...On the edge of the Earth, near a cold Northern sea, a thousand kilometers away from you and from the house, I muffle up in sorrow and I die of solitude..."



DOSH #1(7) 2005
Ismail KURBAKHAZHEV

A SPECIAL EXILE TURNED A HERO

I do not know how it was back then when Mady was young, but now these words can hardly interest the majority of Russians. After the disintegration of the USSR, there emerged a new *yuppie* generation for whom the main goal is personal success and personal well-being. Very few people among them are excited to learn what happens in the country and to the country.

The state where Mady lived and for the benefit of which he worked so many decades no longer exists. The mighty and great empire under the name of the USSR collapsed. Now very many stack up their pockets on the ruins of this empire while the hands of workers that are used only to work remain loyal to honest labor, as before. There are still people there who work to the call of their heart and honor.

However, this country did everything for Mady what it could do. Or, more precisely, it did to him - due to arbitrary decisions authorities of a huge empire, he, being a child from the mountains, was branded *a bandit and the enemy of the people* and sent to the boundless steppes of Kazakhstan, deprived of his home and relatives. And later, the same country that without hesitation had slandered and made him *a special exile* named him a hero - a Hero of Socialist Labor because he really was a hero...

CHILDHOOD

Mady was born in a high-mountainous village of Kolkhadjoj of Itum-Kalinsky district of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR in 1931. He was the senior son in a large family with five more children and since early days he helped his parents around the house. In 1944, he was thirteen year old. The father fell seriously ill and all the father's brothers were fighting at the war front. The young man was especially proud of his senior uncle Suaip. His uncle was at the front from first days of the war and every note from him was a true holiday for Mady's family. But after the battle of Stalingrad there were no more letters from Suaip. He was reported missing in action. Even if there was a letter from him afterwards, the addressees could no longer be found: after February 1944, only the bare walls remained of their house...

EVICTION

Mady recollects how the soldiers came to their village a week prior to deportation. There were many of them. They told the villagers that they would be catching rebels in the neighboring mountains. Then they prohibited entry and departure from village, which became authorized only under special passes. All horses were taken away from the peasants so that nobody could escape from the trap.

As Mady later admitted, he could not forget the cold morning of February 23, 1944. The howling of the dogs had never been so sorrowful, the mooing of the hungry cattle had never been so piercing, and the infinite crying of women and children had never been so helpless. The military gave them half an hour to get their stuff. They had to walk on foot to the district center 12 kilometers away from the village. The sick father could hardly make it. The military commander was *kind* enough: he returned the horse that had just been *nationalized* and strictly warned: "*Only until we reach the district center.*"

Under the barrels of automatic guns and the falling sleet Mady dragged a heavy bag with food on himself and

the mother carried two younger children on her hands all the 12 kilometers. They thought: "*It turns out rather strange - while our folks are fighting in the Red Army at the war against the fascists, here, in deep rear, other parts of the same army are evicting us. What for?*" But nobody explained it to them. On the second day, the people were loaded into cargo cars and the following twenty days they traveled in this prison on wheels, desperate without food, except for that that they had taken from home with them. People were indignant, saying that someone was hiding the truth from Stalin, if he had known this he would not have allowed such injustice. And the truth was, as Maxim Gorky once said, the only woman who nobody wished to see naked. The truth can appear terrible and ugly. Probably for this reason, nobody wished to see *the Chechen truth* even dressed. Unfortunately, neither back then, nor today.

KAZAKHSTAN

At last they reached their final destination. Mady and all others in their car who could survive the long journey until this unknown terminal station were put into trucks and then driven to the village of Kholmogorovka of Gvardeisky district of Taldy-Kurgan region. Kazakhstan met them gloomy and sadly. How could it be otherwise when all the local population had been warned in advance that *traitors of the native land, murderers, thieves, and cannibals* were headed their way? Who would like such a mass invasion of bandits?

After being assigned to every possible collective farm and state farm in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kirghizia, they started an absolutely different life of special exiles. What it meant was well known to the Ingushs, the Germans of the Volga region, the Kalmyks, the Crimean Tatars, and hundreds of thousands other Soviet citizens who were destined to become outlaws overnight. The Soviet law was so special that it easily turned into severe abuse of law for everyone with whom the authorities decided to do away for the reasons known only to them. There were very few pleasures in this new life, but passes, sanctions, and interdictions were in abundance everywhere. The rules, in essence being sheer lawlessness, had to be strictly observed.

In the boundless steppes of Kazakhstan, without a penny in the pocket, slandered by his country, deprived of elementary human rights, Mady, like hundreds of thousands Chechens, talented, hardworking and purposeful, began a new life. All the exiled had a hard life here. Mady's life became even more difficult after his father died of the illness, the cold and famine.

At the age of fifteen, Mady had to take the burden of family cares entirely on his shoulders. He was hardworking and persistent and soon the board of the collective farm recognized him as an example worker. All were surprised how can *a special exile* be proclaimed hard-working and, moreover, an example to others? In 1947, Mady's team collected a record amount of grain in the entire Kazakhstan. The board of the collective farm presented seventeen-year old Mady and his assistant Vera Neselova to government awards. Vera received the medal of the Hero of Socialist Labor, but the authorities did not allow giving the Order of Lenin to *a special exile*. Instead, they gave him the Order of Stalin, probably not to forget about *the father of nations*. The same year Mady became the participant of

USSR Exhibition of Economic Achievements in Moscow. For a Chechen, an exiled Chechen, it was similar to reaching a star from the sky.

Here in Kazakhstan, Mady met his wife Khalipat. It was a happy marriage concluded in heavens. They have lived together already almost sixty years sharing pleasures and sorrows, successes and disappointments. They gave birth to twelve remarkable children and gave good education to all of them, which is a miracle in itself.

In 1957, the Chechens were allowed to go back home. All of them received rehabilitation, many posthumously. The authorities did not even think to apologize, though the Chechens were still grateful.

BACK HOME

Both local authorities and neighbors persuaded Mady not to leave. But the love to the native Chechnya was boundless.

In late December 1959, Mady left Kazakhstan. The departure ceremony was long and touching, all his Russian and the German neighbors cried. His friends will come to visit him more than once.

After almost fifteen years, Mady with the family, numerous friends and relatives saw the long-awaited Chechnya again. The euphoria, however, passed quickly. As it turned out, nobody waited for him on his native land. They were not allowed to settle neither in the mountain areas where there were abandoned houses of the exiled, nor in the houses in the plain area where lived new tenants relocated to here by the authorities from other republics and areas of the immense country. Mady eventually found a shelter in the village of Voznesenovskoe of Malgobeksky district. The board of the collective farm Caucasus could not entrust him even a flock of sheep with his type of documents. They sent him to a distant team of shepherds with a year trial period.

RECOGNITION

In 1963, Mady became the first shepherd in the district who exceeded all plans. He became the collective farm board member. In 1964, he was elected deputy of the Village Soviet, and in 1965 deputy of the City Council.

After that came a rain of all possible government awards: the Medal of Honor, first places in sheep breeding competitions, five gold medals and four silver medals, and finally the Gold Star of the Hero of Socialist Labor and the Order of Lenin (almost 25 years since he was for the first time promoted to this order). It was the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR who gave him these highest awards by its Decree on April 8, 1971.

Unlike Leonid Brezhnev who was proud of every decoration he could receive, Mady knew

that he earned these awards by a long and honest work. He was even shy to wear the medals and considered them window dressing.

Mady was proud of his work and loved it. It is possible to imagine that someone likes the profession of the pilot, the actor, or the teacher, but to love the profession of the shepherd is hardly imaginable.

ABOUT THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

"I have always done what I could do better and better than others. Everything what I did was not for the sake of the



authorities or any awards. Simply I very much love the land and I consider that all honest people should act like this, to do adequately what they are able to do."

He is very conservative in his opinions and sincerely regrets the disintegration of the USSR. It is a little strange to hear regrets about the USSR from a former special exile. Simply perhaps it is human not to think about the things that hurt. Mady is seventy five now and all these years he lived in a severe century in the country where human lives didn't cost a penny. Especially when this person came from Chechnya ...

Mady had a chance to make a good political career. But he preferred to stay with his family and the job. Perhaps it is his affinity with the nature, its beauty and open spaces that saved his soul from vain contacts with a false and spoiled society.

It is remarkable that the main weakness of the USSR, in Mady's opinion, was its atheism. *"It is impossible to forbid a human to believe in God and it is too difficult to force him to believe in the authorities. As long as I remember myself, I always prayed, even when I went to Moscow to receive the award."*

Like many old people, Mady likes to talk about the past and the present.

"Look what a big disorder we have in the country now, especially in Chechnya. How many people are without a roof above their heads, wives without husbands, and children without fathers? And there is nobody held responsible. The authorities almost everywhere in the Post-Soviet lands protect themselves instead of protecting the people."

Mady sincerely complains about the mass-media. He is tired to hear endlessly both on TV and the radio about Chechen terrorism, Chechen trace, or Chechen bandits.

"Our generation is familiar with all that. If someone committed a crime, he is a criminal and a bandit and he has a name and a last name. They do so when speak about the Russians, the Ukrainians, or somebody else. Are we worse? Our people today is just the change in someone's dishonest game. But we also have heroes and honest people, many of them."

Mady told me how at the beginning of the second Chechen war he was once stopped by a soldier at a checkpoint. The guy was displeased that the old man had the nerve to show his documents not leaving the car.

"He offended me. He used curse words and shouted 'You, old bandit, are you completely crazy?!'"

Mady took out from the pocket his certificate of the Hero of Socialist Labor and showed it to the soldier right in his face with the words: *"When you were not yet born, I already was the Hero of Labor!"* The soldier did not expect such a thing. His ordinary ordinary-looking face grew stupid. He stepped back and asked the partner: *"Is it really possible?"*

"What kind of order can such people establish here? As an ordinary citizen, I have so much difficulty getting out of Chechnya, even to Moscow. There are so many checkpoints and at each one of them you go through interrogation: where are you going to, why, what for? For example, shortly before the sad events in Beslan I went to Ossetia. I was stopped five times. They checked my passport in their computer and searched the car. The question is how it was possible for those bandits to drive through these checkpoints with such an amount of weapons? Perhaps it was in someone's interests. There are more questions than answers. To be precise, there is no answer."

I was leaving Aki-Yurt and was thinking about Mady who, despite sufferings and the loss of a peaceful life in a big country, continued to live in a small distant village that seemed to me an oasis of human cleanliness, endurance and will power.

Maybe he is the real hero of our time?

Aki-Yurt, Ingushetia-Moscow



DOSH #1(7) 2005
Abdulla DUDUEV

A TERRORIST



"Zara Khasanovna Murtazalieva, being the organizer, made preparation for terrorism, i.e. committed a search for instruments and accomplices and also deliberately created the conditions for accomplishing an explosion with a view of infringement of public safety, intimidation of the population and exercising influence on decision-making by the authorities." This phrase is not only a rough violation of the truth, that we are going to prove, but also a violation of the Russian language, which does not require any proof. This monstrous phrase was the essence of a long monolog pronounced by inspector Filipchuk from Nagatinsky Office of Public Prosecutor of Moscow.

This is the way the ill-intentioned actions of a young Chechen girl, a student of Pyatigorsk Linguistic University, are described in line with the best traditions of modern fiction of special operations. It sounds strong enough. Almost like Lermontov's prose. Only the military arsenal of the *"malicious Chechens creeping on the coast"* has changed in compliance with the time: the dagger with which the classical Russian writer used to scare the children has nowadays transformed to grenades, automatic rifles, and other sorts of explosives that, according to the version of the Russian mass-media, became the indispensable attribute of the adversary Chechens.

Actually, that fascinating story that the inspector read in court is nothing but a cock and bull story. It is hard to pick a serious name to the guilty verdict that was hastily pronounced to Zara Murtazalieva by Judge Komarova of Moscow City Court. I am speechless...

Well, let's put away the emotions. We shall address to the facts and the dates. According to the version of the investigation, Murtazalieva took special training in a camp of suicide terrorists near Baku and *"arrived in Moscow in September, 2003, to organize and execute acts of terrorism"*. The reality was Different. In 2000, Zara graduated from Naur high school with a silver medal and in the same year she became a full-time student at Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University. In 2003, she had to transfer to the correspondence course because her father died and she needed to help the mother sustain the family. By this time, Zara's two younger sisters

graduated from high school and also wished to continue education. These circumstances pushed Zara to come to Moscow where she decided to find a job and improve her English at the same time. Having passed a rigid competitive selection, the girl managed to get a job with an insurance company *Vital-Polis*. So, she became the insurance agent. Once visiting the mosque at *Prospekt Mira*, (she used to come here whenever possible for the Friday prayer and buy products in the shop located on the territory of the mosque) Zara met Anna Kulikova and Darya Voronova who adopted Islam. The girls made friends and began to communicate. Anna, with the consent of her mother Valentina Mikhajlovna, suggested to her girlfriend to live at her place because Zara had by that time to release the apartment that she had rented earlier. As Valentina Mikhajlovna recollects, Zara made the most favorable impression on her.

"In the end of December, 2003," - lawyer Zezag Usmanova tells, - *"Zara was detained for a check of documents. At the police station, she met a field investigator who appeared to be a Chechen by name of Said who was very kind to her. A few days later, he came to the company where Zara worked. He suggested to her to move to room in a hostel that would be free of charge (!) to her. He moved Anna and Darya there too."* Subsequently it turned out that officer of UBOP GUVd (Regional Directorate for Combating Organized Crime of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs) of Moscow Said Akhmaev *"had taken care"* of the girls under orders of his superiors and the room so kindly provided by him had been preliminary equipped with audio and video recording equipment.

The charges of preparation for an act of terrorism brought against Zara were based on the photos found on her. An escalator in the *Okhotny Riad* shopping center where the girls visited, in particular, an Internet-cafe could be seen on those pictures. According to the girlfriends, they made the pictures because they liked the Chechens, a guy and a girl who went down the escalator and kissed.

The above mentioned statement that Z.Murtazalieva ostensibly had been trained in a camp of suicide terrorists near Baku appeared in the initial decision about excitation of the criminal case. After a joint check of the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan and FSB of Russia, came an official note of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs where it was declared that there was no camp near Baku that trained suicide terrorists. As for the charge against the twenty year old girl that she was a veteran of the first Chechen war, Zara's family had to deny this absurdity by presenting detailed information about where and how Zara's childhood had passed. At that time Zara was still studying at school. Both episodes later disappeared from the case. However, those who by all means needed to finish this affair victoriously still had other charges in stock: *"possession of explosives"* and *"involving other person in committing crimes of terrorist character"*.

FACTORY

Zara was detained on March 4, 2004, not far from the place where she worked near *Kitai-gorod* metro station. The girl was put into a car and brought to *OVD Prospekt Vernadskogo* police station ostensibly for establishment her personality and a check of registration. At the police station, they took her fingerprints and told her that she would be released after the dactylographic procedure. However, when Zara, having washed her hands, was going to take her handbag and leave the station, she paid attention that the bag strangely started to weigh more. The militiamen demanded to show the contents of it for examination and withdrew two briquettes in a foil that appeared to be packages containing 196 grams of plastic explosive.

Who would doubt! It is so natural that a Chechen girl walks around Moscow with a handbag where instead of cosmetics and perfume there is an explosive, a grenade, or a pistol! At the best, drugs in a wrapper... This trick is not new. In 1999, during another attack of Anti-Chechen hysteria that was launched in the country after the explosions at houses in Moscow and Volgogradsk, many Chechens experienced downright persecution approximately in the same fashion. Officers of OMON, special troops, or SOBR rushed into the apartments where the Chechens lived, mainly in Moscow, severely beat them, and, to the amazement of the dwellers, in no time discovered weapons, ammunition and drugs typically in the bathroom or under the bowl in the kitchen. The people were taken away to police stations and charges were brought against them corresponding to the discovered objects. Then bargaining began. If the relatives of the arrested persons were able to pay the ransom, the people were released. The sizes of ransom varied from 5 to 25 thousand dollars and even more depending on the seriousness of the charges. A lot was said about it though the victims categorically refused to submit official complaints being afraid for their destiny.

According to the lawyer, there are no Zara's fingerprints on the plastic explosive that the officers took out from her handbag. Moreover, the officers of *OVD Prospekt Vernadskogo* police station who were interrogated by the court as witnesses could not explain distinctly neither the reason why Murtazalieva's fingerprints could not be found on the packs of plastic explosive that were "discovered" in her handbag, nor why her nails and washouts from her hands had not been examined in due order.

Svetlana Gannushkina, human rights activist:

"I testified in court that Valentina Mikhajlovna Kulikova had asked me to support her. She came to us and told that her daughter was force to testify against her close girlfriend Zara and to confirm charges of a crime that that had not committed. My testimony did not affect the verdict in any way. The verdict did not reflect the fact that after my interrogation the defense called Valentina Mikhajlovna Kulikova a second time. The mother confirmed that her daughter had experienced pressure.

"This case is openly forged. From the beginning till the end. This girl was sentenced to nine years. Moreover, from the first and till the last day Moscow UBOP was keeping an eye on her and a particular officer was supervising her who had been assigned especially to organize this case, which no one even hides! And I am asking then: if the girl was under vigilant supervision, if she was a suicide bomber, why nobody found the time to establish her contacts? How was it possible, while observing her since morning till the night and accompanying her anywhere and everywhere, not to overhear or not to notice from whom she had received the explosive? How was it possible not to continue the observation until her 'connections' got revealed?

"But there are and were no connections. There is only Zara Murtazalieva who acts for herself. If such terrorism by way of private initiative is possible, then only people with a mobile mentality, who are absolutely far away from any ideology, or moved by any specific personal motives are capable of it. One thing is obvious - the observation did not produce any results. But striving in vain is insulting. They understood that they would not reveal anything real and decided that would manage as is and take advantage. The case of Zara is characteristic that she was judged not for her acts, there were no acts. They spoke basically about the influence that she, having a great will power, ostensibly had on her girlfriends. And it is for this influence, to which you may want to give in or resent, the Office of Public Prosecutor demanded twelve years of imprisonment for the accused. The printouts show that much sharper statements were pronounced by the other girls, conversations concerning

Chechnya arose from their initiative, and Zara only told what she knew. And the girlfriends who grew up, like all our children, on book and screen heroics, on romantic histories of struggle for justice, in an impulse of indignation and pity, spoke on many occasions that they would go, die,



and protect the poor people - childish dreams in Robin Hood spirit. But it turns out, in the opinion of the Office of Public Prosecutor, that they conducted such speeches under the influence of Zara because she possesses some parapsychological mechanisms of influence on people. It all looks like the gloomy Middle Ages, witches hunting! In general, it looks as if devilry has become part of our legal procedure as a legalized constituent element.

"Zara Murtazalieva, like many women from provinces, came to Moscow to conquer the capital city, to approve herself, and to achieve success here. And she got nine years of imprisonment. In her best years, in the beginning of her life. It is a huge tragedy, her own tragedy, the tragedy of her family, and it is also the tragedy of our today's society."

January 13, 2005. The accused attested. The interrogation lasted several hours. Zara Murtazalieva denied the version of the prosecution about the place and the procedure of her detention and told how she was beaten in

the Office of the Chief Directorate at Petrovka 38 and forced to sign a confession in criminal intentions. She also informed the court that the transcripts of audio tapes with their recorded conversations contain phrases that were not present on audio tapes. Answering the question about her current attitude to the girlfriends who testified against her, Zara said that she did not condemn them: *"If they were interrogated using the same methods that were applied to me at Petrovka, then they had no other choice. I have sustained because I am innocent and I saved myself, and they were forced to saved themselves."*

Zezag Usmanova, lawyer:

"Nothing similar to that has yet happened in my practice. I have never before seen how the judge during the process showed off such an obvious bias. Judge Komarova in advance ostentatiously let me know what the verdict would be. This determinism could be felt from the very beginning. It is scary that the 'struggle against terrorism' is taking such a turn today. Everything that Murtazalieva is charged with is only words. Whom she likes, whom she dislikes, her ideas and thoughts concerning the events in Chechnya. And all this is no more than a natural human reaction. In fact, there is a war going on now in Chechnya that the entire world knows about not from Zara Murtazalieva. The defense petitioned for demonstration of the materials of video observation that were put in the basis of the charges. The petition was rejected in



an, I would say, unscrupulous manner without any motivation being explained. The judge shouted: 'The prosecution does not put an accent on this proof!' So what does it then put the accent on when there is no other proof?

"I can say with confidence that Murtazalieva is not guilty in committing the crimes of which she is being accused."

"Zara herself defined it most eloquently: 'I am guilty that I was born in this country, I am guilty that I was born a Chechen!' It is so indeed..."

The person's life is being destroyed for nothing. The young talented and hardworking girl is taken away from her family and deprived of freedom for many years. This trial under the name of *The Case of Zara Murtazalieva* is rather characteristic and causes disturbing thoughts concerning may be not only this particular guiltlessly condemned girl.

The ancient proverb that says, *"Don't count out a prison cell, a begging bowl may come out as well"* is not at all obsolete, I am afraid. The last 10 or 15 years have demonstrated that for many Chechens the life has turned into a long terror. The people seem to be even deprived of the right to speak about their troubles. Any emotional statement pronounced under the influence of a personal grief or compassion for the misfortunes of others can be recorded and turned into evidence for a lawsuit...

...In the past years, *Star Factory* became one of the most popular domestic TV projects. What an efficient way to attract the audience for TV that has ceased to carry out its primary goal to be a mass media of information and turned into a means of mass propaganda, like during the stagnant Soviet times. Indeed, it is amusing to watch how *"stars"* are molded out of nothing before your eyes. So, the Russian judicial and legal system is also ready to turn into a factory - a factory of terrorists where everyone who has a wrong appearance or a nationality, etc. can become a *"star"*. This happens today. And tomorrow those who are incorrectly dressed, incorrectly think, or incorrectly live can get into this *"factory"*. Perhaps you think you can stay aside from it? Don't be under a delusion. The story of Zara Murtazalieva and the entire course of litigation allow us to assume that there is a certain allotment that requires a periodic update of the participants in the *"terrorist factory"*. From the material they can afford, as usual.

What is to be done? To stitch up pockets, like that guy from Balashikha? It did not help him, but perhaps we should still do it. And stitch up the mouth too. Just in case, not to be able say anything wrong, to wrong people or at a wrong place. *"Anything you say can and will be used against you in court,"* - the American police warns the people while arresting them. You are not arrested yet, but you are not in America. Here they simply use it. And to what extent!

Not to trust anyone even when he kindly suggests arranging a free-of-charge habi-

tation for you, like Said Akhmaev did a favor to Zara and her girlfriends? To remember that free cheese is only in the mousetrap? In general, to avoid acquaintances who have not been supported by solid recommendations from trusted people? Or, in no time, will they charge you with *"an attempt of intention to betray the Native land"*, as was the favorite expression of semiliterate but hard working guys from Stalin's security. Again there is something wrong with the assumption of innocence, so try to prove that you did not try to conceive a criminal intention at all! And it does not matter that you never blew up anything or you have no slightest idea which side to hold a gun. It is practically impossible to prove the absence of *"an attempt of intention"*. Does it mean that the only resort for us is to follow the motto proven by the previous generations of dissidents (*"Don't believe, don't fear, don't ask"*) and diligently study reference books on how to survive in forced labor camps?

Because no one is insured against it. Even an insurance agent. What a bitter twist of fate - you haven't forgotten it yet? - Zara Murtazalieva was an insurance agent.

P.S.

While preparing this material for publication, I reserved room for hope in last paragraph against all odds and intended to express optimism. The verdict of the Supreme Court of Russia will restore justice, how can it be otherwise? The case is too clear and it is impossible to break the young girl's destiny so brutally. How we wanted to believe in professionalism and impartiality of the Supreme Court. It should demonstrate independence and, saving the honor of the Russian justice, examine the case closely and without a bias. But what happened on March 17 in the Supreme Court completely ruined our last illusions. The Judiciary Board of the Supreme Court left the verdict of Moscow City Court without any changes: Zara Murtazalieva's term of imprisonment was reduced term by half a year simply in connection with the changes in the Criminal Code.

As lawyer Suvorov said: *"This decision of the Supreme Court has given out to law enforcement bodies a carte blanche to illegal methods of conducting struggle against terrorism"*. So, the courts in Russia only provide legal covering of political decisions of the authorities, just like the mass-media carry out the information covering, and the parliament provides the legislative covering!

The defense is going to appeal with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It is the last hope.

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