

A New Stage for Cross-Border Networking

16th Meeting of Centers for Pluralism

by Eric Chenoweth

Eric Chenoweth is co-director of the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe.

Starting in the spring of 1993, the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe has organized semi-annual meetings of the Centers for Pluralism and other partner organizations. IDEE believed that the development of NGOs, pluralism, and democracy in post-communist countries would be aided through the sharing of experiences and the establishment of common programs across borders. IDEE had experienced the power of cross-border cooperation even before the fall of communism, as Poland's Solidarity movement created bonds across the Czechoslovak border and throughout Eastern Europe.

There are now twenty Centers for Pluralism: organizations that carry out broad civic programs and that organize networking both in-country and across borders as a means of strengthening NGO development, democracy, and pluralism. There are now also over thirty CfP partners that cooperate in CfP networking initiatives. These organizations and initiatives that make up the Centers for Pluralism Network are more than just efforts to promote NGO development. They comprise an extensive democratic network covering the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The 16th Meeting of the Centers for Pluralism was held April 20-22 in Jadwisin, Poland. Smaranda Enache, co-director of Liga Pro Europa in Tirgu Mures, Romania, reminded the participants how difficult it is to build and maintain such a network and that such cross-border interaction does not simply occur naturally. Returning to the CfP meetings from a three-year absence as ambassador to Finland during Emil Constantinescu's presidency, she noted that she had seen many other attempts to create cross-border networks fail in the last ten years, but only the Centers for Pluralism has grown in strength, a success she attributed to the CfP's open approach that lets the network participants retain their identity and determine in what direction it will evolve.

The 16th CfP Meeting, held near Warsaw, the site of the first meeting, was the largest and broadest gathering ever of the Centers for Pluralism and their partner organizations, with 88 participants from 24 countries and regions. With the sponsorship of the National Endowment for Democracy and also additional support from the Foundation for Education for Democracy, the East European Democratic Center-IDEE, and the Dutch Embassy in Poland, IDEE was able to invite not only members from the existing CfP Network but also many new participants from Belarus, Mongolia, Central Asia, and southeastern Europe who otherwise could not attend.

The mixture of experiences sparked fruitful discussions throughout the meeting, with old and new participants intermingling and sharing experiences easily. Significantly, the participants from Belarus and Central Asia offered a unique – and chilling – perspective on the difficulties faced by their democratic and NGO communities in challenging anti-democratic regimes.

The aim of the meeting was to spark a new stage of cross-border networking, building on old ties and sharing new successes – and failures – among Centers for Pluralism and partners in order to create new bonds for common action. Most importantly, organizers focused on key areas in which the Centers and Partners successfully addressed new challenges in countries where democracy is foundering or non-existent.

One key area of activity for many Centers and partner organizations has been the organization of non-partisan NGO participation in elections, especially for monitoring and parallel vote counting to ensure against fraud, abuse, and unfair conditions of elections. A special session was organized on the afternoon of April 19, before the official opening of the meeting, for organizations that have been involved in election activity. Zoran Lucic, a member of the board of the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID, which was instrumental in ensuring an independent accurate count of the September presidential and parliamentary elections in Serbia, outlined the strategies CeSID used in its monitoring and parallel vote counting efforts, which involved 14,000 people). Participants discussed these strate-



Gabriel Andreescu,
Association for the Defence of
Human Rights in Romania
– Helsinki Committee



Left to right: Balazs Rakosy, Fidesz, Hungary, Smaranda Enache, Liga Pro Europa, Romania, Agu Laius, Jaan Tonisson Institute, Estonia

gies in the context of the circumstances in their own countries. Unfortunately, as was noted, monitoring elections and documenting electoral fraud is not always sufficient to get rid of dictators, as in the case of Milosevic. In 2000, the OSCE declared the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan to be unfree and undemocratic, but this did not change the outcome. The fraud and violations in the November 2000 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were observed, monitored, and documented, which did not prevent international observer missions, including the OSCE from giving them a passing note. Participants agreed that the lesson for the future elections is to share lessons and experiences in preparing the environment for free and fair elections, monitoring the vote, detecting fraud, and reporting the real electoral outcomes.

Following an analysis of the political situation in Poland by Jakub Karpinski, professor of sociology and political science at the University of Warsaw, a panel discussion looked at the role of NGOs in building democracy in the region. Reports were presented on Serbia by Miljenko Dereta of Civic Initiatives, on Belarus by Vincuk Viacorka of Supolnosc, on Georgia by Ivlian Haindrava of the Center for Development and Cooperation, and on Kyrgyzstan by Tolekan Ismailova of the Coalition of NGOs for Democracy and Civil Society. The speakers all noted that under authoritarian or repressive regimes, NGOs were by definition political, simply by existing, and activities directed against anti-democratic regimes were necessarily partisan. Nevertheless, Mr. Dereta, in describing the non-partisan role of the NGO coalition, Izlaz 2000 (Exit 2000) in last September's elections in Serbia, argued that its success was based on the trust it had with citizens, which political parties, because of their fractious nature, did not have. This trust would be lost if NGOs chose to endorse individual candidates or parties (see also "The Serbian Experience: Revolution? No, Networking" in CfP Newsletter no. 24). But there is often no choice between non-partisan and political activity for NGOs in other circumstances. Mr. Viacorka and Ms. Ismailova noted that in their situations the governments had pushed NGOs into a clearly confrontational stance and the democratic NGOs had accepted the challenge. In Georgia, however, Mr. Haindrava stated that the NGOs' non-political stance was more a reflection of ideas

From the Working Group on "The Political Situation in the Region"

excerpts from a summary
by Jakub Karpinski

The swinging of the electoral pendulum between the left and the right is a characteristic phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. The left in this context usually means the postcommunist left, that is a renamed and transformed communist party. In the Czech Republic the ruling social democratic left is not postcommunist in this sense, although it includes former communists.

What's wrong with postcommunists, some people may ask. Why should one be concerned with their return to power? The answer given by participants in the working group was that postcommunists do not act only as individuals, they act as part of postcommunist organizations having at their disposal significant assets. Those organizations usually have diverse memberships, but they include many people whose political attitudes and preferences were shaped by the past. Such organizations tend – to different degrees in different countries – to preserve policies from the communist period. Polish, Lithuanian, or Hungarian problems with postcommunists, however serious for the countries concerned, are minor compared with those faced by the democrats in Belarus, the Caucasus or Central Asia, where there is a high degree of policy continuity from communist times.

An important issue connected with the past is that of responsibility, not only in political, but also in legal terms. Communists are responsible for crimes committed when they were in power. Those crimes were not prosecuted under communism. Justice is generally considered to be a precondition for democracy, and justice implies making people responsible for their crimes. In many cases legislation from communist times would be sufficient to prosecute, but the political will is lacking. In several countries, prosecutors and judges are still so linked with the communist past that it is difficult to prosecute and sentence former communists for their crimes.

The independence of the media is an important issue in practically every country, including those, like the Czech Republic, that are considered more democratic in other respects. The temptation to use the media in politics has proved great both for governments and political parties in the region and there is a great temptation to use the media to advance their political objectives. The state or public TV is often used in smear campaigns against the opposition or simply to increase the public visibility of one political camp and to limit the visibility of another. Political influence over the media is often gained through ostensibly apolitical institutions, like the media supervising bodies that are nominated by parliaments and the executive. Political parties achieve influence through "their people" in these institutions.



Photo: contribution of Civic Initiatives.

Left to right: Vincuk Viacorka, Supolnasc - Civic Society Center, Belarus, Miljenko Dereta, Civic Initiatives, Serbia, Eric Chenoweth, IDEE, USA, and Ivlian Haindrava, Center for Development and Cooperation, Georgia



Arif Gadjeiev, Musavat Party,
Azerbaijan

imposed by Western donors that put NGOs into an unnecessary straightjacket. Several participants stressed that Western donors often refuse to consider proposals from NGOs whose members are actively involved in promoting democratization in their countries. This is particularly true of donors who have offices in the given country, who often choose maintaining good relations

with autocratic regimes over supporting anti-authoritarian forces.

In addition to the elections session, the meeting was organized around seven thematic working group sessions with the aim of improving cross-border cooperation among NGOs working in similar fields of activity. The themes were: Independent Media, Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Civic Education, Human Rights, Political Developments, Elections, and Cross-Border Cooperation. In each session, CfPs and partner organizations presented their work and discussed areas of possible cooperation. Participants also discussed specific developments in various countries to gain ideas for their own organizations.

CfP Working Groups: Concrete Actions for Cross-Border Networking

The goal of the working groups was to develop concrete suggestions for the CfP Network. Out of the human rights working group came a proposal for a more effective solidarity network to be organized to defend CfPs and Partner organizations that are suffering from repression, as was organized in response to Vincuk Viacorka's arrest and in several cases involving Cuban dissidents (see also Javier de Cespedes' speech on page 5). After a discussion, a group of individuals from the CfP Network agreed to promote effective action in cases where the CfP Network can have an impact.

From the cross-border cooperation working group came reports of many practical efforts supporting NGO development, democracy, and civic education. These included the internship programs organized by IDEE and IDEE-Warsaw for activists from many countries, as well as the internship programs organized specifically for Belarusian activists by the East European Democratic Center-IDEE and for Crimean Tatars by IDEE-Warsaw. The Foundation for Education for Democracy has in recent years worked with Centers for Pluralism and partners in Crimea, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Serbia, among other countries and has developed a strong partnership with IDEE in its women's leadership training program in the Caucasus. Most urgent, however, were examples of actions to support the humanitarian, civic, and political work of Lam, whose representatives also addressed a plenary session (see p. 7).

The civic education working group heard reports from the Foundation for Education for Democracy in Poland (FED), the Tashkent Public Education Center (TPEC), Civic Initiatives in Serbia (CI), and others describing their activities in this field. The working group presented proposals to devote a special issue of the CfP Newsletter to the topic, including special sections for use by NGOs in different countries; and to develop a library of training materials that could be used by CfPs in their training programs. (For an example of such efforts, see cover and page 10 for the full Civic Initiatives's "Becoming a Citizen" poster.)

The elections working group sparked the partnership of CeSID and the Belarusian Democratic Assembly of NGOs; an exchange of activists was planned and Mr. Lucic was invited to train regional leaders of the Assembly's proposed monitoring network.

The working group on reconciliation discussed sources of conflicts and paths to reconciliations in a number of areas. One of the bases for the discussion was the presentation by Davit Berdzenishvili on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. He and his colleagues from the Republican Party and from CDC have written on the subject, proposed peace initiatives, and met with Abkhaz representatives. Miljenko Dereta, rapporteur for the working group, suggested that these efforts might have relevance for Serbia. The discussants compared political, geographical, and psychological aspects of conflicts and ways of defusing them. Some of the participants noted also the negative role sometimes played by churches of all denominations in ethnic and national conflicts.

The media working group made several proposals, including the possible introduction of a Russian-language NIJ Weekly Service and the publishing of a civic education manual on how to read a newspaper.

Through these working groups and the informal networking that took place throughout the weekend, many new ideas were generated for the Centers for Pluralism Network and a new stage was opened in broadening its reach. Coming Newsletters will report on ongoing initiatives in the areas of civic education, networking, and elections, among others. What was clear from the 16th Meeting of the Centers for Pluralism, however, was that such meetings continue to play an important role in fostering NGO development within countries and democratic activism throughout the region.



Ivlian Haindrava, Center for Development and Cooperation, Georgia and Vincuk Viacorka, Supolnasc - Civic Society Center, Belarus

Cuba:

“Thank You Dear Friends” CfP Solidarity for the Cuban Opposition

by Javier de Cespedes

For the third straight year, Javier de Cespedes, President of Directorio Revolucionario Democrático Cubano, a Miami based organization dedicated to supporting non-violent opposition to the Castro dictatorship, took part in the Centers for Pluralism meeting, sharing information about the Cuban opposition and learning from the experience of colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe. The text of his speech at this year's meeting follows:

I want to begin by delivering to you a simple but deep message of thanks from a Cuban prison for all the activities and support that you have lent our cause in the past months.

The message comes to you from the man who you see here in this picture, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez “Antunez,” who says: “Thank you dear friends, I don't know what you are doing out there, but please, keep doing it. Because for the first time in 10 very long years of suffering. I am being treated as a human being.”



Jorge Luis Garcia
Perez “Antunez”

Opposition

The Cuban internal opposition continues to grow in number of organizations, in geographic reach, and, more importantly, in the number of actions that it takes. As documented by Directorio's report “Steps to Freedom,” the number of actions has grown from 44 in 1997 to 440 in 2000.

It is important to know that the NGOs that make up the Cuban opposition are composed of people like those of us sitting around this long table. They are human rights organizations, educational organizations, unions, political organizations, civic initiatives, and many more just like ours.

One important example of these organizations are the independent libraries that have grown to more than 80 as of this moment. These libraries have been founded by people in their own living rooms.

These organizations are also working together. For example in the Varela Project, more than 100 organizations of the internal opposition are carrying out a campaign to gather 10,000 signatures to demand under the terms of the dictatorship's own constitution that a referendum be carried out on the way elections are held in Cuba.

Repression

To counteract this growth of the internal opposition the dictatorship has changed the mode of repression from a police-type repression that treated dissidents like common criminals to a military-type repression centralized in the Center for His-

torical Studies of State Security in Havana that treats dissidents as an insurgent force.

This is one part of the dictatorship's strategy to isolate the men and women of the opposition in an attempt to destroy them. An offensive that includes increased efforts in the diplomatic area, actions to increase the effectiveness and control of the physical movements of the dissidents, and attempts to cut off the supply chains to the internal opposition.

Solidarity

That is why what we do here is so important. That is why international solidarity is so important, and we want to thank you together with “Antunez” for all the incredible things you have done to help the internal opposition in Cuba:

In Estonia, Agu Laius of the Jaan Tonisson Institute, who is with us today, managed to get a film that had been smuggled out of Cuba featuring representatives of Mothers for a General Amnesty asking for international solidarity shown on Estonian television. Agu also organized meetings for us with human rights organizations, a major Estonian newspaper and with Parliamentarians who did not have any information about Cuba's internal opposition until that moment. One parliamentarian promised us that at an inter-parliamentary congress to be held in Cuba, he would let his voice be heard in Havana. And he did! Just a few days ago, the Estonian delegate confronted the dictator in a meeting, openly stating Estonia's solidarity with democracy and human rights in Cuba.

In Latvia, Agu was also instrumental in helping put together a successful action with Juris Prunis and the Party of Fatherland and Freedom that included press coverage on the situation of political prisoners in Cuba and meetings with parliamentarians in the Saeima.

In Romania, Gabriel Andreescu of the Helsinki Committee and Center for International Studies carried out a demonstration in front of the Cuban Embassy after a press conference about human rights in Cuba. I was there watching the demonstration and filming as two diplomats from the Embassy came out to debate with Gabriel, only to leave practically running a few minutes later after being confronted with documents on the situation of human rights in Cuba.

In the Czech Republic, Petruska Sustrova of the Lidove Noviny newspaper arranged for statements of solidarity with the pro-democratic movement in Cuba from Czech senators, which received radio coverage through Radio Prague International that dissidents in Cuba could hear.

And so that you know how far these actions go, I want you to know that Petruska Sustrova in the Czech Republic and Stojan Obradovic of the STINA agency in Croatia managed, on the same day, to publish very strong statements about the internal opposition in Cuba and the actions of the dictatorship in major newspapers in Prague and in Slovenia. The impact was so strong that only a few hours later the Cuban dictator was publicly complaining in a speech that his government was being called a dictatorship around the world.

In Hungary, Zoltan Guba of Democracy after Communism Foundation organized a press conference with the Hungarian Secretary of State, Zsolt Nemeth who declared Hungary's solidarity and support for the Mothers for a General Amnesty, for the internal pro-democratic movement as a whole, as well as for the independent unions and journalists. It was the first time that a government recognized the legitimacy of the actions of the dissidents in Cuba. Zoltan not only accomplished this, but he also formed of a Permanent Hungarian Solidarity Committee for Democracy in Cuba that included prominent Hungarian public figures.

In Russia, Sasha Podrabinek of the Express-Chronicle newspaper put together a press conference in Moscow about the human rights situation in Cuba. He also participated as a journalist in another press conference, given by the Russian Ombudsman for Human Rights, Oleg Mironev, who was returning from a trip to Cuba. The press conference began with Mr. Mironev stating that human rights were respected in Cuba,

but after the questions from Sasha, and other journalists who had been informed about human rights abuses in the previous press conference organized by Sasha, Mr. Mironev ended by stating that "he did not know anything about human rights in Cuba" and that he had only visited Cuba at the invitation of the Cuban Government and he had only visited the places they took him, where he did not see any human rights violations. Even the representatives of the Cuban embassy who were present had nothing to say.

In Poland, Malgorzata Naimska of IDEE-Warsaw has done so many things that nothing I say would be enough to thank her for her solidarity. Support in major emergencies of life and death situations when urgent phone calls were needed from top officials, organizing the presentation of human rights films in Polish universities, press conferences, letters, meetings with parliamentarians, activists, etc. As far as the struggle of the internal opposition in Cuba is concerned, Malgorzata has in IDEE-Warsaw a center of permanent support for the cause of freedom in Cuba.

And many of you may remember the Tbilisi letter signed last year [at the 15th meeting of the Centers for Pluralism] in Georgia, a letter with a message of solidarity and support to the pro-democratic movement in Cuba. A letter that was transmitted by radio on multiple occasions and was heard by thousands of Cuban families with your message of hope.

As you can see these meetings are very helpful to those active in the Cuban opposition. These actions that you carried out are helping people who are fighting for human rights in Cuba right now, and you should know it.

Thank you all.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!!!

The *Centers for Pluralism Newsletter* is sent **free of charge** to individuals and organizations **in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union**. Please send your request to IDEE-Warsaw: P.O. Box 31, 00-950 Warsaw, Poland, Phone: (48 22) 627 18 45, Phone/fax: (48 22) 627 18 46, E-mail: idee@idee.ngo.pl. Include your address, tel./fax, and e-mail and brief message about why would you like to receive the *Newsletter*.

If you live in a country where currency is convertible and \$30 does not represent a week's salary, we ask that you subscribe to the *Newsletter* for a mere \$30/year (3 issues).

If you are in the U.S. or Canada, send check or money order to IDEE-Washington, 2000 P Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Please indicate that the payment is for a subscription to the *Newsletter*.

If you are located in Western Europe, subscription payments should be sent to Polnische Buchhandlung, Burgasse 22, 1070 Vienna, Austria in Austrian shillings, or directly to the following account: Postbank Frankfurt/M, 300340 605 (BLZ-500 100 60) in German marks. Polnische Buchhandlung also accepts payment by credit card (Visa, Master Card, Eurocard, and American Express). Please note clearly that the payment is for subscription to the *Newsletter*.

Chechnya:

Humanitarian Catastrophe, how to help

At a plenary session of the Meeting of the Centers for Pluralism, Zuleikhan Bagalova and Lecha Iliasov of Lam, the Chechen Center for Pluralism, talked about the dire humanitarian conditions in Chechnya and their efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict. Over a year and a half after the beginning of the second Chechen war, more than one hundred thousand refugees still live in rotting tents in Ingushetia, and about the same number of people live in dreadful conditions in the Chechen capital Grozny: among ruins, without basic supplies of food or medicine, and in constant fear of repression from Russian forces. (See Dispatches Nr. 15)

Janina Ochojska of Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH) described her organization's herculean efforts to distribute clean water in Grozny, while Michael Luhan of People in Need (PIN) in the Czech Republic described his organization's efforts to distribute food and other supplies in Chechnya. PAH and PIN are among very few foreign organizations that continue working to alleviate the humanitarian disaster in Chechnya itself. Both Ochojska and Luhan stressed that the Russian government has deliberately made it very difficult for humanitarian organizations to work in Chechnya. Of the twenty countries

To contact Lam, write:

Zuleikhan Bagalova
c/o The Andrei Sakharov Museum
Zemilianoy val, 57, bld. 6
107120 Moscow, Russia
or E-mail Lecha Ilyasov at:
lechalam@hotmail.com

Polish Humanitarian Action

5 Szpitalna Street, Apt.3
00-031 Warsaw, Poland
Tel. +48 22 828 88 82, 828 90 86
Fax: +48 22 831 99 38
E-mail: pah@pah.ngo.pl,
Web: www.pah.ngo.pl

People in Need Foundation

Kavci Hory, 140
70 Prague 4, Czech Republic
Tel. +42 02 61134401, Fax. +42 02 61134137
E-mail: pinfcz@czech-tv.cz
Web: www.pinf.cz

in which he has worked, Luhan said, he has never seen conditions as bad as they are in Chechnya.

In its final session, the meeting adopted a proposal from the Cross-Border Working Group to encourage NGOs to organize efforts in their countries to raise funds for the humanitarian and other work of LAM. NGOs should establish separate bank accounts and appeal through newspaper and other advertisements for individuals and corporations to contribute to that account.

To support the humanitarian, social, educational and publishing activities of Lam, contributions may be sent to IDEE in Washington or to IDEE-Warsaw. (See p.1) Please write "FOR LAM CfP" on the check.

Dispatches from Chechnya no. 15

Current Conditions in the Chechen Republic

GROZNY, July 16, 2001 – Over the past two weeks, the situation in Chechnya has become much worse. In an attempt to punish the people of Chechnya, the infamous mop-up operations – which are essentially the kidnapping of innocent civilians by Russian soldiers – have become more frequent. During these operations, Russian law enforcement officials (it is generally they who run the mop-up operations, with the support of the army) take whatever they please from people's homes – audio and video equipment, gold jewelry, decorative knives and money. They arrest innocent people and demand bribes for their release. The price of a prisoner can range from \$100 to \$3000.

The mine war has also intensified. Landmines explode daily in Grozny, Gudermes, Argun and Urus-Martan, along the

roads where federal troops usually travel. But it is often not soldiers but civilians who are injured or killed, usually women, children and the elderly. It is also common for those who set the mines, generally teenage boys, to be killed by explosions.

Russian troops generally take punitive measures immediately after any landmine explosion. Any man from 15 to 45 years of age who happens to be nearby will be taken to the so-called filtration camps. Most of those who are taken, if they make it out alive, are crippled or ill. It is not uncommon for young men who have left the filtration camps to die under mysterious circumstances within two or three weeks of their release.

Recently, an unknown group set up a landmine in front of the Russian command post in the village of Stariye Atagi.



Masked Russian soldiers on top of an armored personnel carrier return from battle in Chechnya. Kavkaz border crossing, Ingushetia, December 13, 1999.



Chechen refugee girl in front of her tent in the Sputnik refugee camp during a winter storm, December 24, 1999.

Photos: Human Rights Watch 2000

Immediately after the explosion, 19 villagers were arrested. Two of them were killed and several more were seriously injured. A few days later, soldiers from the command post robbed the local hospital. They forced all the patients out into the street, where they insulted and threatened them. Finally, after taking money from several female patients and doctors, they ran off.

These are only some of the many examples of the barbaric nature of this war, which is being fought without concern for human rights or even the most basic of international norms.

Both the Russian and Chechen sides violate the human rights of civilians. Especially bad are the so-called Wahhabis, who have initiated a campaign of terror against ordinary Chechens. People are shot in their own homes, in front of their children. Over the past two months there have been more than 20 such attacks on peaceful, unarmed people. The victims are more often than not socially active people – local government officials, clergy and Chechen human rights activists. Extremists have even begun attacking members of President Aslan Maskhadov's administration.

Nonetheless, no one will take responsibility for the murders that have been committed. The Russian government insists the murders have all been committed by Chechen soldiers. President Maskhadov, however, denies that his troops have had any part in these murders and claims that they were committed on the orders of the Commander of the Russian armed forces. The Wahhabis, while not denying that they took part in the murders, do not claim responsibility either. Generally these crimes are committed by ethnic Chechens wearing camouflage fatigues and masks.

The entire population of Chechnya is paralyzed with fear of attacks from both the Russian army and extremist Chechens. The social and economic life of the Republic has come to a standstill.

The new [Russian installed ed.] government of Chechnya has neither power nor influence in the Republic. Power remains in the hands of the Russian troops who are engaged in a full-scale genocide against the Chechen people. The Russian armed forces are literally hunting down young Chechens. They arrest, shoot or maim the most talented and healthy young men. Drug addicts, alcoholics and criminals are free to go where they please without anyone paying them the slightest attention.

In the midst of total destruction, Russian soldiers support an illicit oil drilling industry that causes irreparable harm to the natural environment and to the health of Chechnya's people.

Specialists estimate that 2,000 tons of petroleum products are exported from the Republic every day. The profits from this primitive oil industry serve mostly to line the pockets of Russian generals.

Three institutes of higher education are still in operation in Grozny – the State University, the Teacher Training College and the Petroleum Institute. There are several dozen elementary and high schools remaining.

Children study in very difficult conditions, and their lives are constantly in danger. Both the school and university buildings are periodically shelled by Russian troops.

Teachers and professors have not received their salaries in months. They experience frequent threats from unknown individuals who demand that they cease their work or face violent consequences.

The work conditions for doctors are no better. According to the head doctor at one of Grozny's hospitals, medical facilities in the city receive no funding, and they lack necessary equipment and medicines.

Chechnya is still under a curfew. Anyone who goes out on the streets after the curfew takes effect will be shot without warning.

In the midst of all this, crime, especially in Grozny, is flourishing. Every hour, dozens of crimes are committed in the city, from pick pocketing to robbery to murder. Over half of the crimes in Chechnya are committed by Russian soldiers. In the



Photos (also on the page 9) from the Human Rights Online website: www.hro.org/war

past three months soldiers murdered several drivers with the intent of stealing their cars. Crimes are reported only when there is a witness or the victim is left alive. In reality there are probably many criminal acts that go unreported. Around Grozny there are frequent discoveries of new mass graves, all containing the remains of people who were shot without trial and without witnesses.

At a recent session of the Russian State Duma, Vladimir Kalamonov testified that the official number of people missing in Chechnya is 950. In reality, there are well over 5000 people who have disappeared without a trace.

Earlier this spring, the Russian government attempted to drive Chechen refugees out of the camps in Ingushetia and back to Chechnya. On April 1st, the government stopped providing aid to refugees in Ingushetia and officially prohibited humanitarian organizations from distributing aid. But despite this, refugees refuse to return to Chechnya until the military campaign is brought to an end.

On June 15, three refugees living in the Sputnik camp on the Chechen-Ingush border began a hunger strike,



demanding that the Russian government stop the war and begin negotiations with President Maskhadov. Today there are 37 people participating in the hunger strike. They are being monitored by doctors from the Sleptsov regional hospital. Several of the hunger strikers are in serious condition and have already been given medical assistance. This act of protest by Chechen refugees has already been shown several times on Russia's NTV television station, but to this day there has been no official reaction from the Russian government. A few high-ranking bureaucrats called the hunger strike a ploy of the Maskhadov regime.

In sum, the conditions in the Chechen Republic are very troubling and they are getting worse every day.

To receive Dispatches from Chechnya by email or fax, or for more information about Lam's work in Chechnya, please contact IDEE at idee@idee.org

USEFUL WEB SITES!!!

Four important resources focused on the region of Central Asia / Central Eurasia:

1) The International Crisis Group's Central Asia Project.

This project is producing a series of reports on topics related to the potential for conflict in Central Asia, with a special focus on specific actions that can be taken to reduce this risk. The reports are available on the web at <http://www.crisisweb.org/>. To be included on the list to receive these reports (at no cost) or to receive notification when new reports appear, write to <ICG-CAP@crisisweb.org> or visit: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/ICG-CAP.html>

2) The Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS).

CESS is a new and rapidly growing scholarly association aimed at fostering communication and high standards of scholarship in the social sciences and humanities focused on Central Eurasia. Among its other activities CESS has just issued a Call for Contributions for its new publication, the Central Eurasian Studies Review (for information, contact: Virginia Martin <martinvi@email.uah.edu>). For information on CESS membership, the Annual Meeting or CESR, visit: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~cess/>

3) The CentralAsia-L Announcement List for Central Asia Studies.

CentralAsia-L distributes concise information about conferences, publications, jobs, grant opportunities, programs and other resources and opportunities in

Central Asian studies. Members receive the information via e-mail free of charge. With ca. 3,000 subscribers worldwide, it is one of the most widely subscribed lists of its kind. Postings average about 2-3 per day – just the key information to keep you up-to-date in this field. For information, to subscribe, or to post information, write to: CentralAsia-L@fas.harvard.edu, or visit the webpage/archive at: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/CASWW_CentralAsia-L.html

4) <Central Asian Studies World Wide> website.

This web resource contains a wide range of information relevant to the study of Central Asia, ranging from recent dissertations, experts, scholars and institutions in Central Asian studies world wide, publications, Internet resources, and much more. Here you can find out about a broad range of other resources, including the Ferghana-Valley discussion list, the AnthEurasia discussion list (for anthropology of the former Soviet Bloc), and the Central-Asia-Inst-List (for discussion of institution-building in Central Asian studies). Visit <CASWW> at: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~casww/>

New Website of the Glasnost Foundation

In the previous issue of the Newsletter we have published information on Glasnost North Caucasus, which appeared to be quite old. We are sorry for this mistake. The Foundation has launched a new website at www.glasnostonline.org and the News Service is now called Glasnost Caucasus since it provides stories from Georgia Azerbaijan and Armenia. The newline is now available on the website.

The European Institute for the Media has begun to publish the online Ukrainian Media Bulletin. The Bulletin aims to provide media professionals and researchers worldwide with a regular free newsletter on media developments in Ukraine. Information is divided into the following categories: Main media news, Media and government, Media law, Media conferences, New media technology. This information is provided by the EIM Ukrainian Bureau and a network of Ukrainian correspondents. The EIM bears sole responsibility for the content of these reports.

The Ukrainian Media Bulletin will be published in Russian and Ukrainian. You can subscribe by contacting Ljudmila von Berg at <madp@eim.org>. If you would like to receive a copy in English, please contact the EIM at the email address <JOE-List@gmx.de>, putting 'UMB English request' in the subject line.

I Z A B E R I P R A V U S T V A R

POSTANI GRADJANIN



BECOME A CITIZEN

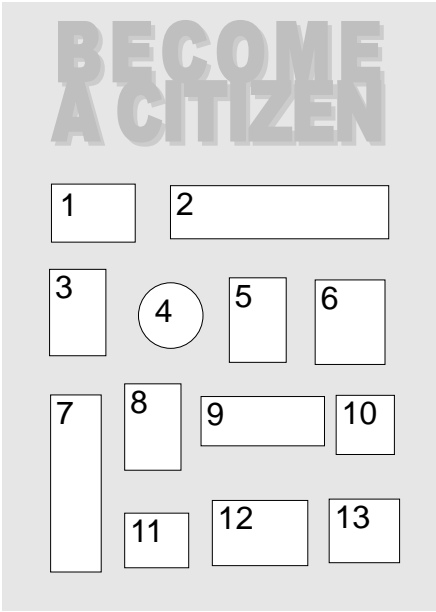
In early 2001, Civic Initiatives, based in Belgrade, launched a new program "Postani Gradanin," or "Become a Citizen" as an offshoot of its overall Democracy School program for NGOs, but targeting final-year secondary school students. The idea of the program is to make up for the last ten years of propaganda and the lack of civic education in the schools and to encourage students who will soon reach voting-age to learn about their rights and how they can choose to be active citizens. According to Civic Initiatives Director Miljenko Dereta, "The younger generation has been totally isolated. Many have never met anyone outside of Yugoslavia. For them, television was full of nationalistic hate propaganda with nothing to counter it."

Tanja Azanjac, coordinator of the program, described how they designed the initial "Become a Citizen" program around students in three southern Serbian cities where there has been a low level of NGO activity: Cacak, Pozega, and Uzice. Twenty-five final-year secondary students in each city were chosen for a class taught over four weekends by instructors from CI's Democracy School and Tim TRI, CI's training arm covering various issues of democratic citizenship, participation, and val-

ues. Many students reported that their teachers asked them to give full reports to their classes about each weekend's course and to share the materials they received with their classmates.

"Become a Citizen" is a broader program developed with posters, leaflets, and television and radio advertisements with the aimed at provoking young people to think more actively about the values of citizenship in a democracy. To achieve this aim, Civic Initiatives staff developed the poster on the opposite page. "The entire staff was involved in brainstorming," writes Tanja Azanjac. The idea was that we had to make something attractive to young people, with a lot of colors, and to use images familiar to them, and through those images to promote the values of democracy, respect for human rights, and tolerance.

..." These ideas were developed into the poster on the opposite page, in which basic concepts of democracy and promotional ad slogans substitute for brand names on images associated with popular products. (The final poster was designed by the Quartet Agency, which often provided its services to the civic movement during the Milosevic dictatorship.) The translation for each product is below:

	1. Milk Chocolate	EQUALITY Equally sweet	8. Lucky Strike	RIGHT OF CHOICE No harmful effects
	2. Coca Cola	DEMOCRACY A drink for all times and all generations	9. Mars chocolate	TOLERANCE Give a bite to others
	3. Davidoff Cigarettes	DIALOGUE Easy breathing	10. Kodak film	FREEDOM High sensitivity
	4. Nivea	INTEGRATION A friendly touch	11. Knorr soup	ACCOUNTABILITY Its old granny's recipe
	5. Smoki Nuts	EXPERTISE Good old taste	12. Fa soap	SUFFRAGE Eliminates all stains
	6. Schwepps	CITIZEN Freshness all the time	13. Levi's jeans	HUMAN RIGHTS All sizes, fit perfectly each and everyone
	7. Cappuccino	RESPONSIBLE MEDIA Stay awake		