

Newsletter „Women, peace, security“ September 2012



Dear readers, by publishing this newsletter, we wish to contribute to better information about UN documents on security, demilitarisation, and to the greater influence of women on post-conflict problems solving, first of all in Serbia, and then in the Western Balkans. We hope that this newsletter will be read by those who are interested in the re-examination of the traditional concept of national security, the reform of the security sector, the gender dimension of security, security integrations and feminist antimilitarist concept of security. We expect your contributions on these questions. It is accessible online on the website: www.zeneucnom.org

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Women in Black and 1325 Resolution



Patriarchy rules by fear

Since September 7th until September the 9th, Women in Black Network had a regular meeting in Vrnjacka Banja. The first session, under the title `Citizens ask UN – I Chapter,` was held due to Open Day `Women, peace, security,` which is organized by UN Women every year in cooperation with UN Permanent coordinator for Serbia, regarding International Day of Peace of 21st of September. William Infante, as UN Permanent coordinator in Serbia, was interlocutor of Women in Black.

We have discussed what most threatens the peace, on safety of citizens in Serbia and all over the planet. UN Permanent coordinator in Serbia was expected to provide us with answers on: failure of the ICTY Outreach Programme, because convicted for war crimes, after their return from prison, or while they are still imprisoned, are on the lists of candidates for the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the situation in Croatia is not even a little bit better, so only Criminal Court's role is filled. UN official was informed once again that Serbia is the only country in the region which did not sign the Convention against cluster bombs. He was also asked upon the election of Vuk Jeremic as chair of the General Assembly of the UN, knowing his previous engagement as Serbian Foreign Minister. Also, women have asked what will happen 2015. when Roma Decade will be over, because until now, flimsily has been done for this population. Why women organizations are not participating in planning of production and procurement of arms in Serbia, women wanted to know, too. He was asked for his opinion on the immunity for peacekeepers who commit sexual crimes and if he expects sanctions for Serbia because Belgrade did not allow Ban Ki Mun, Secretary General of the UN, to use the air space of Serbia for the flight to Kosovo. Could UN be engaged to prevent war in Vojvodina or do they sanction countries for Roma population deportations, where some of the questions women have raised.

UN official responded that UN estimates are that minorities in Serbia are not terrorized, that all over the region, not only in Vojvodina, hate speech is spreading, that new President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic was surprised himself with election results, and members of government with coalitions they found themselves within. Corruption exists, to his mind, because 30% of citizens offers bribe themselves, and 67% of them, offers it to the doctors. His message was that citizens should not provide the bribe, and those who ask for it, should be indicted to Ombudsman. He concluded that Serbia made progress in the past few years in terms of human rights and protection of dignity. He also praised the work of the Ombudsman, and the laws on extra-judicial proceedings, which enabled legally invisible to obtain identity documents. He promised to respond other questions in writing.

During Second Chapter of the session `Citizens ask UN,` Morgiana Brading as Representative of the Secretariat of the Hague Tribunal in Belgrade, was answering the questions. She shortly introduced women with the mandate and work of the Court, which was the template for the international courts that were established after.

She considers its greatest merit the trials for sex crimes during wars in former Yugoslavia. Victims of sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at least 20.000 of them, gave birth to 2000 children. She agreed upon the critics of Women in Black representative on Outreach program and its failure

and she announced that in accordance with exit strategy of the Court, the office in Croatia and Kosovo will be closed by the end of this year. The number of employees in Hague, will be reduced from 1.000 to 700 of employed.

Then, women from Srebrenica spoken. Kada Hotic shortly evaluated work of Hague tribunal: `What is done, is done.` Zumra Sefomerovic considers that victims are fighting for the justice by themselves, because they are the only interested in punishing of perpetrators. Sabra Koljenovic informed she saw a baby in Bratunac (Srpska Republic) whose mother raises its three, small fingers in the air.

Then, documentary projection `The end of impunity: sexual violence in front of Tribunal,` followed, as well as short documentaries of Women in Black video activism group, on facing the past and Women in Black actions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Feminist Reading Circle was next, and women spoke of what they were reading or suggested to each other what they should read. They promoted Edvin Cudic`s book: `May of 1992.`, `My horizons: I think, act, exist-life through turbulent and turning times` of Zagorka Golubovic and book of Nevena and Magda Simin: `Why they have been silent? mother and daughter about the very same war.`

Ljupka Kovacevic, psychologist from Kotor, spoke during second day of this encounter, on emotional jeopardy during social crisis. `The right of emotional response on societal crisis does not exist. Emotions are forbidden. Patriarchy rules by fear. Emotions are socially disqualified. Your opinion is not heard as much as it is when your ratio speaks. But, for action, both emotions and apprehension are needed. Emotions are always logical, even when they do not reach the awareness of the individual` - said a representative of NGO Anima.

There was a discussion upon situation in Serbia, region and the world. Professor Golubovic during her research confirmed that respondents do consider unemployment as their greatest problem, while she considers theft and redrawing the electoral will of citizens as the greatest problem. Stasa Zajovic, as Women in Black coordinator, asked why International Monetary Fund did not write off debts of the poorest countries of the world and why the difference between political left and right fades. She emphasized that in Serbia only 6,5% are highly educated, while 1,3 million of citizens never attended school or never finished at least some of the grades of elementary school. During privatization, near half of million of people have lost their jobs, and the number of supporters of entry into Europe decreased for 2% in less then six months.

Janja Bec, researcher, was a Nobel Prize nominee, based on suggestions of Omarska inmates. She ascertained Women in Black were the only organization which invited her to provide a seminar, after twenty years of her research on war crimes. `Tribunal in Hague was established before Srebrenica, because, for years what have happened in Srebrenica, was going on in the past. We can compare it with courts on war crimes in Cambodia, Congo... First master`s thesis on war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina was written by a woman in my College and the first student who was interested in war crimes topic was from Italy.` She transferred the most important impression of the Principal investigator of the Hague Tribunal: `Victims were wondering to what they have experienced but they did not feel hatred for the perpetrators.`

Twenty seven Women in Black actions between two Septembers were evaluated in a specific way and then birthday of Global Fund for women was celebrated.



Activities of Women in Black on the demilitarization of the security

Freedom for Pussy Riot

Women in Black demanded freedom for members of group Pussy Riot from Russia, by publishing their statement on 10th of September and by organizing feminist action in front of Russian embassy of Belgrade, on 12th of September.

Three times they read a song in honor of Nadezda Tolokonnikova, Marija Alohina and Ekaterina Samucevic, in Russian, Serbian and Russian language, while the choir of gathered citizens spouted: `Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away Put Putin away, put Putin away,` as well as `Shit, shit, the Lord's shit! Shit, shit, the Lord's shit!,` or `Virgin Mary, Mother of God, become a feminist become a feminist, become a feminist` ...

Integral song goes:

*`Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away
Put Putin away, put Putin away*

*Black robe, golden epaulettes
All parishioners crawl to bow*

*The phantom of liberty is in heaven
Gay-pride sent to Siberia in chains*

*The head of the KGB, their chief saint
Leads protesters to prison under escort
In order not to offend His Holiness
Women must give birth and love*

*Shit, shit, the Lord's shit!
Shit, shit, the Lord's shit!*

*The Church's praise of rotten dictators
The cross-bearer procession of black limousines
A teacher-preacher will meet you at school
Go to class - bring him money!*

*Patriarch Gundayev believes in Putin
Bitch, better believe in God instead
The belt of the Virgin can't replace mass-meetings
Mary, Mother of God, is with us in protest!*

*Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away
Put Putin away, put Putin away.`*

*Virgin Mary, Mother of God, become a feminist
Become a feminist, become a feminist*

On the placards the inscriptions were also in three languages: `Stop Putin`s tyranny,` `We all are Pussy Riot,` `Freedom for Pussy Riot.` Of course, there was Women in Black placard `Always disobedient` and PACE flag.

Women in Black members, fourty of them all together, were dressed up in colourful clothes, like the one hippie movement members used to wear and masks a la Pussy Riot. The song they sang in front of Russian embassy `Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away` is the reason why three partners from Russia were sentenced with two years of jail.



Stasa Zajovic from Women in Black said that activists from Serbia expressed their solidarity with Russian partners and all free thinking people in Russia: `We consider their act an act of responsible citizens who care of public interest and that this is only introduction in persecution of all free thinking people who express their attitudes and build different Russia. It is a voice of people in Russia who stand up against totalitarian-clerical regime. Serbia should support deliberation of Pussy Riot because it is in accordance with all the international documents, European Parliament resolutions on the separation of church and state, signed both by Russia and Serbia,` Zajovic emphasized.

Tomislav Nikolic, President of Serbia, who did not reject yet his dukedom appellation as Chetnik, from the times while he was politically in love with Vojislav Seselj indictee in front of Hague tribunal, recently invited Vladimir Putin to officially open south stream gas pipeline in Serbia, Milos Urosevic reminded. Nikolic`s statement is for the anthology, when he was head of the largest opposition party and said that he would like Serbia to be Russian province, and then, just a few days ago he revealed that only Serbia he loves more than Russia, Urosevic explained. Among those who have supported Russian girls, was Fika Filipovic, 83 years old Women in Black activist and she does not hide her pessimistic vision of Serbian future.

In the statement, released just before the performance, it was stated: *`We want to express our deepest bitterness regarding terror over members of artistic feminist collective `Pussy Riot` from Mosqow. We are admiring artistic-ethical-political act of `Pussy Riot.` We do support unconditionally their nonviolent resistance and disobedience to totalitarian-clerical-criminal regime of Vladimir Putin, in conjunction with Russian Orthodox church and criminal oligarchs. We join actions of solidarity and demands for deliberation of all of free thinking individuals, organizations, collectives from Russia and all over the planet.`*



In the statement it is reminded that three members of Pussy Riot collective-Nadezda Tolokonnikova (22), Maria Alohina (24), Ekaterina Samucevic (29), were sentenced only because they have expressed their disagreement with Putin`s tyranny and fundamentalist Russian Orthodox Church through nonviolent performance on 21st of February in the Temple of Christ the Savior in Moscow, and punk prayer `Saint Mary put Putin away,` as responsible citizens and artists. Afterward they were arrested. Trial in the style of the darkest Stalinist purges ended August 17th, when the terrifying Moscow Court imposed a sentence of two years in prison for so-called `hooliganism driven by religious hatred. Totalitarian and criminal regime of V. Putin, announced the continuation of reprisals against other members of `Pussy Riot`. It is more than obvious that this process is the introduction of new political trials against the opposition, leaders of non-violent civil movements. Putin`s regime and his policy of terror, destroys any attempt to create space for the other, liberal voices, seduces total control over all forms of communication and criminalize solidarity. In short, life is in danger, not only for the other members of `Pussy Riot` collective but for all free thinking citizens of Russia, who nonviolently, publicly and in a responsible way, express their dissent and demand of the government

of Russian Federation to release immediately `Pussy Riot`, innocent prisoners and termination of revenge and terror against those who peacefully express their views and different political attitudes. We demand **immediate release** of prisoners - `Pussy Riot` innocent members of the government of Russian Federation and end of the terror and revenge against all those who peacefully express their thoughts and different political views,' it is concluded in the statement.

Women in Black Network members from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Novi Becej, Pancevo, Kikinda, Sombor, Krusevac, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Nis, Zajecar, Bor, Kotor, Pljevlja, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Zagreb,... joined this statement.

Here is the trial closure of Nadezda Tolokonnikova, stated on 8 of August, 2012:

`Essentially, it is not three singers from Pussy Riot who are on trial here. If that were the case, what's happening would be totally insignificant. It is the entire state system of the Russian Federation which is on trial and which, unfortunately for itself, thoroughly enjoys quoting its cruelty towards human beings, its indifference to their honour and dignity, the very worst that has happened in Russian history to date. To my deepest regret, this mock trial is close to the standards of the Stalinist troikas. Thus, we have our investigator, lawyer and judge. And then, what's more, what all three of them do and say and decide is determined by a political demand for repression. Who is to blame for the performance at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and for our being put on trial after the concert? The authoritarian political system is to blame. What Pussy Riot does is oppositional art or politics that draws upon the forms art has established. In any event, it is a form of civil action in circumstances where basic human rights, civil and political freedoms are suppressed by the corporate state system.

Many people, relentlessly and methodically flayed alive by the destruction of liberties since the turn of the century, have rebelled.

We were looking for authentic genuineness and simplicity and we found them in our punk performances. Passion, openness and naivety are superior to hypocrisy, cunning and a contrived decency that conceals crimes. The state's leaders stand with saintly expressions in church, but their sins are far greater than ours. We've put on our political punk concerts because the Russian state system is dominated by rigidity, closedness and caste. And the policies pursued serve only narrow corporate interests to the extent that even the air of Russia makes us ill.



We are absolutely not happy with—and have been forced into living politically—by the use of coercive, strong-arm measures to handle social processes, a situation in which the most important political institutions are the disciplinary structures of the state - the security agencies, the army, the police, the special forces and the accompanying means of ensuring political stability: prisons, preventive detention and mechanisms to closely control public behaviour. Nor are we happy with the enforced civic passivity of the bulk of the population or the complete domination of executive structures over the legislature and judiciary. Moreover, we are genuinely angered by the fear-based and scandalously low standard of political culture, which is constantly and knowingly maintained by the state system and its accomplices. Look at what Patriarch Kirill has to say: “The Orthodox don’t go to rallies.” We are angered by the appalling weakness of horizontal relationships within society. We don’t like the way in which the state system easily manipulates public opinion through its tight control of the overwhelming majority of media outlets. A perfect example is the unprecedentedly shameless campaign against Pussy Riot, based on distorting facts and words, which has appeared in nearly all the Russian media, apart from the few independent media there are in this political system.

Even so, I can now state—despite the fact that we currently have an authoritarian political situation—that I am seeing this political system collapse to a certain extent when it comes to the three members of Pussy Riot, because what the system was counting on, unfortunately for that system, has not come to pass. Russia as a whole does not condemn us. Every day more and more people believe us and believe in us, and think we should be free rather than behind bars. I can see this from the people I meet. I meet people who represent the system, who work for the relevant agencies. I see people who are in prison. And every day there are more and more people who support us, who hope for our success and especially for our release, who say our political act was justified. People tell us, “To start with, we weren’t sure you could have done this,” but every day there are more and more people who say, “Time is proving to us that your political gesture was correct. You have exposed the cancer in this political system and dealt a blow to a nest of vipers, which then turned on you.” These people are trying to make life easier for us in whatever way they can and we are very grateful to them for that...

We are grateful to all those who, free themselves, speak out in our support. There are a vast number, I know. I know that a huge number of Orthodox people are standing up for us. They are praying for us outside the courtroom, for the members of Pussy Riot who are incarcerated. We’ve seen the little booklets Orthodox people are handing out with prayers for those in prison. This shows that there isn’t a unified social group of Orthodox believers as the prosecution is endeavouring to say. No such thing exists. More and more believers are starting to defend Pussy Riot. They don’t think what we did deserves even five months in detention, much less the three years in prison the prosecutor would like. And every day, more and more people realize that if this political system has ganged up to this extent against three girls for a 30-second performance in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, it means the system is afraid of the truth and afraid of our sincerity and directness. We haven’t dissembled, not for a second, not for a minute during this trial, but the

other side is dissembling too much and people can sense it. People can sense the truth. Truth really does have some kind of ontological, existential superiority over lies and this is written in the Bible, in the Old Testament in particular. In the end, the ways of truth always triumph over the ways of wickedness, guile and lies. And with each day that passes, the ways of truth are more and more triumphant even though we are still behind bars and are likely to be here a lot longer yet.

Madonna performed yesterday (7 August). She appeared with Pussy Riot written on her back. More and more people can see that we are being held here unlawfully and on a completely false charge – I'm overwhelmed by this. I am overwhelmed that truth really does triumph over lies even though physically we are here in a cage. We are freer than the people sitting opposite us for the prosecution because we can say everything we like, and we do, but those people sitting there say only what political censorship allows them to say. They can't speak words like "punk prayer" or "Virgin Mary, Banish Putin!" They can't say the lines from our punk prayer that have to do with the political system. Perhaps they think it wouldn't be a bad thing to send us to jail because we are rising up against Putin and his system as well but they can't say so because that's not allowed either. Their mouths are sewn shut. Unfortunately, they are mere puppets. I hope they realize this and also take the road to freedom, truth and sincerity because these are superior to stasis, contrived decency and hypocrisy. Stasis and the search for truth are always in opposition to one another and, in this case, at this trial, we can see people who are trying to find the truth and people who are trying to enslave those who want to find the truth.

Humans are beings who always make mistakes. They are not perfect. They strive for wisdom but never actually have it. That's precisely why philosophy came into being, precisely because philosophers are people who love wisdom and strive for it, but never actually possesses it and it is what makes them act and think and, ultimately, to live the way they do. This is what made us go into the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, and I think that Christianity, as I've understood it from studying the Old and New Testaments, supports the search for truth and a constant overcoming of the self, overcoming what you used to be. Christ didn't associate with prostitutes for nothing. He said, 'I help those who have gone astray and forgive them' but for some reason I can't see any of that at our trial, which is taking place under the banner of Christianity. I think the prosecutor is defying Christianity. The lawyer wants nothing to do with the injured parties. Here's how I understand this: Two days ago, Lawyer Taratukhin made a speech in which he wanted every



one to understand that he had no sympathy with the people he is representing. This means he's not ethically comfortable representing people who want to send the three members of Pussy Riot to jail. Why they want to do this, I don't know. Perhaps it is their right. The lawyer was embarrassed, the shouts of "Shame! Executioners!" had got to him, which goes to show that truth and goodness always triumph over lies and evil.

I think some higher powers are guiding the speeches of the lawyers for the other side when, time after time, they make mistakes in what they say and call us the "injured parties". Almost all the lawyers are doing it, including Lawyer Pavlova who is very negatively disposed towards us. Nevertheless, some higher powers are causing her to say "the injured parties" about us rather than the people she's defending, us. I wouldn't give people labels. I don't think there are winners or losers here, injured parties or accused. We just need to make contact, to establish a dialogue and a joint search for truth, to seek wisdom together, to be philosophers together, rather than stigmatizing and labelling people. This is one of the worst things people can do and Christ condemned it.

We have been subjected to abuse during this trial. Who would have thought that a person and the state system he controls would be repeatedly capable of entirely wanton evil? Who would have thought that history and Stalin's Great Terror, in particular, not so very long ago, would not be taught at all? It makes you want to weep to see how the methods of the medieval inquisition are brought out by the law-enforcement and judicial system of the Russian Federation, which is our country. Since the time of our arrest, however, we can no longer weep. We've forgotten how to cry. At our punk concerts we used to shout as best we could about the iniquities of the authorities and now we've been robbed of our voice.

This whole trial refuses to hear us and I mean hear us, which involves understanding and, moreover, thinking. I think every individual wants to attain wisdom, to be a philosopher, not just people who happen to have studied philosophy. That's nothing. Formal education is nothing in itself and Lawyer Pavlova is constantly accusing us of not being sufficiently well-educated. I think though that the most important thing is the desire to know and to understand, and that's something people can do for themselves outside of educational establishments, and the trappings of academic degrees don't mean anything in this instance. Someone can have a vast fund of knowledge and for all that not be human. Pythagoras said that 'the learning of many things does not teach understanding'. Unfortunately, that's something we are forced to observe here. It's just a stage setting and bits of the natural world, bodies brought into the courtroom. If, after many days of asking, talking and doing battle our petitions are examined, they are inevitably rejected.



The court, on the other hand—and unfortunately for us and for our country—listens to the prosecutor who repeatedly distorts our comments and statements with impunity in a bid to neutralize them. There is no attempt to conceal this breach in an adversarial system. It even appears to be for show. On 30th July, the first day of the trial, we presented our response to the accusations. Prior to that we were in prison, in confinement. We can't do anything there. We can't make statements. We can't make films. We don't have the internet in there. We can't even give our lawyer a bit of paper because that's banned too. Our first chance to speak came on 30th July. The document we'd written was read out by defence lawyer Volkov because the court refused outright to let the defendants speak. We called for contact and dialogue rather than conflict and opposition. We reached out a hand to those who, for some reason, assume we are their enemies. In response they laughed at us and spat in our outstretched hands. "You're disingenuous," they told us. But they needn't have bothered. Don't judge others by your own standards. We were always sincere in what we said, saying exactly what we thought, out of childish naivety, sure, but we don't regret anything we said, even on that day. We are reviled but we do not intend to speak evil in return. We are in desperate straits but do not despair. We are persecuted but not forsaken. It's easy to humiliate and crush people who are open, but when I am weak, then I am strong.

Listen to us rather than to Arkady Mamontov talking about us. Don't twist and distort everything we say. Let us enter into dialogue and contact with the country, which is ours too, not just Putin's and the Patriarch's. Like Solzhenitsyn, I believe that in the end, words will crush concrete. Solzhenitsyn wrote, "the word is more sincere than concrete, so words are not trifles. Once noble people mobilize, their words will crush concrete."

Katya, Masha and I are in jail but I don't consider that we've been defeated. Just as the dissidents weren't defeated. When they disappeared into psychiatric hospitals and prisons, they passed judgement on the country. The era's art of creating an image knew no winners or losers. The Oberiu poets remained artists to the very end, something impossible to explain or understand since they were purged in 1937. Vvedensky wrote: "We like what can't be understood, What can't be explained is our friend." According to the official report, Aleksandr Vvedensky died on 20 December 1941. We don't know the cause, whether it was dysentery in the train after his arrest or a bullet from a guard. It was somewhere on the railway line between Voronezh and Kazan. Pussy Riot are Vvedensky's disciples and his heirs. His principle of 'bad rhythm' is our own. He wrote: "It happens that two rhythms will come into your head, a good one and a bad one and I choose the bad one. It will be the right one." What can't be explained is our friend. The elitist, sophisticated occupations of the Oberiu poets, their search for meaning on the edge of sense was ultimately realized at the cost of their lives, swept away in the senseless Great Terror that's impossible to explain. At the cost of their own lives, the Oberiu poets unintentionally demonstrated that the feeling of meaninglessness and analogy, like a pain in the backside, was correct, but at the same time led art into the realm of history. The cost of taking part in creating history is always staggeringly high for people. But that taking part is the very spice of human life. Being poor while bestowing riches on many, having

nothing but possessing everything. It is believed that the OBERIU dissidents are dead, but they live on. They are persecuted but they do not die.

Do you remember why the young Dostoyevsky was given the death sentence? All he had done was to spend all his time with Socialists—and at the Friday meetings of a friendly circle of free thinkers at Petrushevsky's, he became acquainted with Charles Fourier and George Sand. At one of the last meetings, he read out Gogol's letter to Belinsky, which was packed, according to the court, and I note, with childish expressions against the Orthodox Church and the supreme authorities. After all his preparations for the death penalty and ten dreadful, impossibly frightening minutes waiting to die, as Dostoyevsky himself put it, the announcement came that his sentence had been commuted to four years hard labour followed by military service.

Socrates was accused of corrupting youth through his philosophical discourses and of not recognizing the gods of Athens. Socrates had a connection to a divine inner voice and was by no means a theomachist, something he often said himself. What did that matter, however, when he had angered the city with his critical, dialectical and unprejudiced thinking? Socrates was sentenced to death and, refusing to run away, although he was given that option, he drank down a cup of poison in cold blood, hemlock.

Have you forgotten the circumstances under which Stephen, follower of the Apostles, ended his earthly life? "Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.' And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and dragged him away, and brought him before the Council. And they put forward false witnesses who said, 'This man incessantly speaks against this holy place, and the Law.'" He was found guilty and stoned to death.

And I hope everyone remembers what the Jews said to Jesus: "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy." And finally it would be well worth remembering this description of Christ: "He is possessed of a demon and out of his mind."

I believe that if leaders, tsars, elders, presidents and prime ministers, the people and the judges really understood what "I desire mercy not sacrifice" meant, they would not condemn the innocent. Our leaders are currently in a hurry only to condemn and not at all to show mercy. Incidentally, we thank Dmitry Anatolievich Medvedev for his latest wonderful aphorism. If Medvedev gave his presidency the slogan: "Freedom is better than non-freedom", then, thanks to Medvedev's felicitous saying, Putin's third term has a good chance of being known by a new aphorism: "Prison is better than stoning."

I would like you to think carefully about the following reflection by Montaigne from his Essays written in the 16th



century. He wrote: "You are holding your opinions in too high a regard if you burn people alive for them." Is it worth accusing people and putting them in jail on the basis of totally unfounded conjectures by the prosecution?

Since in actual fact we never were, and are not, motivated by religious hatred and hostility, there is nothing left for our accusers other than to draw on the aid of false witnesses. One of them, Motilda Ivashchenko, was ashamed and didn't show up in court. That left the false witness of the expert examination by [Vsevolod] Troitsky, [Igor] Ponkin and Mrs [Vera] Abramenkova. And there is no evidence of any hatred or enmity on our part other than this expert examination. For this reason, if it is honourable and just, the court must rule the evidence inadmissible because it is not a strictly scientific or objective text but a filthy, lying bit of paper from the medieval days of the inquisition. There is no other evidence that remotely hints at a motive.

The prosecution is reluctant to produce excerpts from the text of Pussy Riot interviews because they are primary evidence of this lack of motive. For the umpteenth time, I will quote this excerpt. I think it's important. It was from an interview with "Rusky Reporter", given the day after the concert at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour: "Our attitude toward religion, and toward Orthodoxy in particular, is one of respect, and for this very reason we are distressed that the great and luminous Christian philosophy is being used so shabbily. We are very angry that something beautiful is being spoiled." It still makes us angry and we find it very painful to watch.

The lack on our part of any show of hatred or enmity has been attested by all the witnesses examined by the defence. And by the evidence of our characters. In addition to all the other character statements, I'd like you to consider the findings of the psychiatric and psychological tests the investigator ordered me to undergo in detention. The expert's findings were as follows: the values to which I am committed in my life are justice, mutual respect, humanity, equality and freedom. That's what the expert said, someone who doesn't know me and Investigator Ranchenko would probably have very much liked him to write something different. It would appear, however, that there are more people who live and value the truth, and the Bible's right about that.

Finally, I'd like to quote a Pussy Riot song because, strange as it may seem, all our songs have turned out to be prophetic, including the one that says: "The KGB chief, their number one saint, will escort protestors off to jail" – that's us. What I'd like to quote now, however, is the next line: "Open the doors, off with the shoulder-straps, join us in a taste of freedom."

It was followed by applause and after that verdict was read.

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/pussy-riot-trial-nadezhda-tolokonnikovas-closing-statement-2012-8#ixzz28GPGj61X>

Suffering has no nationality

UN Development Fund organized conference under the title `Ensuring justice, reparation and rehabilitation for victims of sexual violence in war` on 5th and 6th of September. Women in Black were represented by Milos Urosevic, who said among other things: `I am coming out of country criminal aggression successor regime. First reports on rape of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina`s war, were published in august 1992. Women in Black considered those rapes to be systematic and mass rapes as a part of ethnic cleansing program, organized by the side of the state as war instrument and they represent continuum of male violence over women.`

Urosevic said women who were raped during war in Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be divided and differently valued depending of their nationality or religion. Women`s suffering are of the same value. However, it is undisputed that among them were more then 80% of Bosnian women, and among perpetrators most of them were Serbs. In accordance with their political attitudes Women in Black have demanded that war rape should be proclaimed as war crime, as well as all the other types of sexual violence over women during war (forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization ect, to organize international court which would prosecute those who are responsible for war rapes, and the court should be consisted of women and only, to contrive political asylum for women who have survived sexual violence during war, to make pressure on regimes in ex Yugoslavia by the side of international community in order to disband all camps, private jails, military brothels in which maintain women sexual slavery. UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, with which State signatory parties have obliged to exclude of amnesty all the responsible for sexual violence during war. Serbia has adopted action plan on implementation of 1325 Resolution in 2010., but was yanked out of the document part related to reparations for women, Urosevic added.

Hague verdicts have defined differently war rape: as an act of ethnic cleansing, type of torture, war crime. Perpetrators should provide survived women victims with reparations. In accordance with New York Court verdict, Radovan Karadzic has to pay reparation of 745 million \$ for twelve women who have survived war rape in Omarska concentration camp, in 1992. Reparation could be demanded by Srpska Republic, at whose head was him in the time of crime, Urosevic said.

The same is the obligation for Serbia whose citizens were convicted, because it would be admission of guilt of the state itself. Rape during war in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be treated as genocide, he concluded. After his presentation there was a documentary projection `Sexual crimes over women in war of Bosnia and Herzegovina-we remember` -Women in Black peace action on Republic Square in Belgrade, on 24th of May, 2012.

During Conference harrowing testimonies could of been heard. Enisa Salcinovic, raped in Foca, said: `We, as victims do not ask for mercy but law and justice. Women are double victims: of sexual violence and of inability to achieve the justice to live with dignity. We did not harm anybody. We are those who suffered. Therefore, persecution of perpetrators of sexual violence should be more efficient.`

Bakira Hasecic in front of association `Women war victims` from Visegrad said: `Victims right to justice does not become obsolete, but we victims are dying.`

Madeleine Rees out of Women league for peace and freedom said: `Law has to assure justice, which will assure peace.`

Stop cluster bombs

International Day of Peace-21st of September was a cause for Women in Black to continue their action Stop cluster bombs! with which they have started in June in order to put pressure on Serbian institutions with an aim to sign the Convention on ban of cluster bombs. Cooperating with women from Women in Black Network, out of eleven cities of Serbia, Women in Black have organized petition signing in favor of signing the Convention on ban of cluster bombs. On the squares of Leskovac, Krusevac, Dimitrovgrad, Belgrade, and during festival FemiNis in Nis, activists were gathering signatures. The petition with signatures will be delivered to Minister of Defense Aleksandar Vucic. More than 900 signatures were collected. By this petition it is demanded of Serbian authorities to sign this certain Convention. It is of great importance because victims of cluster bombs in Serbia do not have the right to receive international help because the signature does not exist yet.

This action has to remind institutions and citizens that Serbia is the only state in the region which did not sign yet this certain Convention. Also, they were reminded that during NATO bombing of Serbia, more than 300.000 cluster bombs were thrown and those which did not explode are covering now 16 millions of square meters in Serbia. It means that there is territory size of Novi Belgrade covered with cluster bombs in Serbia. Until now, 31 person died of cluster bombs and 160 of them were wounded, out of them 97% of victims were civilians.

‘As feminists and antimilitarists we want to promote peace culture, against all the armies, arm trades, any war or any military organization,’ it is said in the invitation calling for joint action Stop cluster bombs! It is added, too, that all the responsible citizens will give their contribution in our fight against cluster bombs by signing this petition. It will help Serbia to be country of peace, healthy life and solidarity instead of Balcan leader exporting death by exporting arms.



Beside Women in Black Belgrade, also participated Women in Black of Serbian Network: Pescanik/Krusevac, Independent Women`s Center/Dimitrovgrad, Roma Association/Novi Becej, Danica Roma Association/Pancevo, Zene za mir/Leskovac, Esperanza/Novi Sad, Women`s alternative/Sombor, SOS telephoe for women and children victims of violence/Vlasotinca, Women from the south/Piroto, Center for girls and Women`s Space/Nis, Phenomena/ Kraljevo, and Olivera Nosov, an activist.

Shamelessly squandering

Women in Black have expressed strong protest against military air show in Batajnica, on 2nd of September, as well as against festive defile of cadets who are produced into lieutenants, on 8th of September, 2012. ` It is all about disgraceful, shameless squandering of state money, of a state facing bankruptcy, of which we were warned by Serbian Prime Minister. Both of those manifestations were organized glorifying militarization with clear aim of promoting military which is a successor of armed forces (JNA and VJ), which have left behind them ravage during wars in ex Yugoslavia, committing innumerable crimes. The actual Serbian military fosters the same hegemonic continuity and in personnel as well, with its antecedents and a prove for it among other things is that the headquarter of the army is kept by Ljubisa Dikovic, hero of Slobodan Milosevic, suspected for war crimes in Kosovo and with good reasons. Never, with any word, nowhere, no one of state officials or military commanders, ever condemned the warpath. On the contrary, those adventures have become a part of heritage, based on which new generations are brought up as a new generation of officers.

New lieutenants parade, held in the presence of state leadership, after three months since two cadets have lost their lives, just before they graduated Military Academy, during their involvement in military exercise in Pasuljanske livade, and a little bit longer after two aldermans have been killed while they were cleaning remains of cluster bombs in Kopaonik. Celebration despite of those two tragic events is just a prove of inhuman character of those two manifestations. The fact it was organized in accordance with command of state and military leadership is a reason for the deep concern of Serbian citizens, because while they are living under lower limit of existence, it means it is more important to President, military officials and government, fostering of false values then the existence of those who are jeopardized.

Those attacks on budget in the middle of economic catastrophe can not be of representative character and within the international publicity delegitimise Serbia as serious partner, aware of its problems, and ready to solve them in a responsible way, with a demanded help. We do demand out of Serbian Military to inform us as soon as possible how much they have spent for those manifestations, and out of the Assembly and Serbian authorities drastic decrease of military budget during rebalance, ` it is concluded in the statement of Women in Black.

Silence about the crimes

In the continuance of the state evidence against members of ` Jackals ` unit, on 27th of September, for war crime of execution of at least 44 Albanian civilians in Cuska village, on 14th of May, 1999., Jovica Novakovic testified. For this certain crime in Belgrade, Toplica Miladinovic is on trial as well as eleven members of paramilitary forces ` Jackals. ` Novakovic, who is retired military, who used to work in military departure of Pec during NATO bombing, in 1999., testified: ` There were no many burnt houses in Pec. From some of the Albanian houses we could of hear shooting, it means their houses were full of arms. Even if you would like to stop houses of burning, you could not. It was done by some individuals during night. Almost 90% of Albanians as well as Serbs should be convicted. `

Court Council asked the witness what does he knows about Cuska village. He answered: ` I have heard nothing about event in Cuska village. I do not know if war crimes have been committed none who are

the perpetrators. He only admitted he knows only one of the accused-Miladinovic: He was the best commander we ever had. He was showing off, but he was a comrade. A real patriot. He would only report- Clean! Cleaning without number of executed Albanian terrorists. I have heard about Nebojsa Minic-Mrtvi. He was a fear and terror for the Abanians. The witness said he did not see any of members of Albanian Deliberation Army: I have not seen Albanian terrorists but I saw Albanian people. People were going in columns toward Montenegro. But in all those villages Albanian terrorists were hiding. He continued with policy of denial and silence about Serb crimes over Albanian civilians.

Reported by
Milos Urosevic

Acquaintances defend the accused one

In the continuance of the trial to Misa Vacic, spokesman of 1389 movement, on 11th of September, in Belgrade, defense witnesses Milos Curakovic and Drago Kukolj appeared in front of the Court. They have testified that Vacic was detained by two policemen in 8 Omladinskih brigada Str., in New Belgrade. He was charged with obstructing official persons in performing duties. They claimed Vacic did not attack two of them. They emphasized that two policemen have tried to push him in the official car by force.

I saw how two policemen grapple with Vacic. I heard them shouting on him to enter the car, while he was asking why. At the end he succeeded to squirm, but his jacket remained in their hands. It was the first time I saw the police giving up on someone's arrest, Curakovic said. Witness said he did not know by then the accused one. The second witness said he was introduced with the accused one after this incident: They were trying to push him in the car, but when one of the policemen went to ask for the help, he somehow squirmed and left. It was weird to me why police did not follow him, Kukolj said and he added the incident lasted the most five minutes.

The trial will continue on 23d of October.

Impresum

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