



OZONA  
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The Villa Decius Association is a non-governmental cultural institution established in 1995 to foster a dialogue between European intellectuals and to encourage the ideals of democratic thinking and integration, with a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe. In its programmes, the Villa Decius Association gives an important place to the role of the artist in community dialogue, the protection of cultural heritage, the issues of ethnic minorities and the development of tolerance. Villa Decius Association has its seat in a Renaissance Palace in Krakow, Poland. [www.villa.org.pl](http://www.villa.org.pl)

The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) is an independent and pan-European foundation promoting cross-border work in the fields of cultural policy, arts and the media. Zona is part of the media programme of the foundation. The ECF was founded in 1954 and is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. [www.eurocult.org](http://www.eurocult.org)

### Borders still exist

visas denied for no reasons... trafficking people... hours of waiting to be controlled... stamps, documents, confirmations, official letters... humiliating interrogations... constant uncertainty.

This is what many Europeans are facing when they wish to enter the European Union. Greater mobility inside the European Union has imposed strict controls on its external borders. Sharing cultures and experiences has become more difficult in spite of the power and potential of global electronic technology.

This reality was the background of ZONA, an initiative of the Villa Decius Association and the European Cultural Foundation. These organizations share a mission of promoting cultural initiatives across borders.

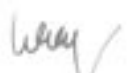
The ZONA project had two main goals: to raise awareness of the impact of borders on the lives of Europeans and to promote internationally talented young photographers and journalists from Eastern Europe. Zona offered a platform for sharing both professional and personal experience in the field.

This magazine is the final result of Zona as well as an exhibition of the works given awards which will be presented in many European countries.

On behalf of the organizing bodies, we want to express our gratitude to our partners in the project. We also wish to congratulate young journalists and photographers for their thought-provoking articles and photo reportages. We believe that their work opens new perspectives for many. Zona proves that work for European communities has to be continued.



Danuta Glondys  
Director  
The Villa Decius Association



Gottfried Wagner  
Director  
The European Cultural Foundation







Jan Brykczyński, freelance Polish photojournalist. Studied Social Sciences at Warsaw University for two years. Since 2002 has studied at The National Film, Television & Theatre School in Łódź (Department of Photography). An exchange student at FAMU Film School in Prague. Cooperates with *National Geographic* and *Polityka* weekly. Awarded III prize for a picture story in the category Daily Life at *Newsweek Poland Photo Awards 2005*. Interested in how in social and political changes in Central and Eastern Europe influence young people's lives.



The Ukrainian village of Karpackie is situated 10 km from the border with the European Union. The Bieszczady mountains, a popular tourist area in Poland, can be seen from the nearest peak. But the proximity to the EU does not seem to affect young people's lives.



Anna collects hay from her field. After the Soviet Union collapsed, everyone got a little piece of land. There are no machines and most of the work is done with the basic tools, often the same way as centuries ago.



A little bar arranged in an old wagon is the heart of the village and a meeting point for young people.



Young girls during the Sunday party. Before their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, most of them will probably marry a guy from the same village.





Satellite TV brings images of the western consumption to most of the houses in Karpackie. At the same time there is almost no jobs available in the village, and the only way to earn money is to leave to work in a big city or in EU.



At 6am 10-year-old Natasha is still asleep, before going up the mountains with the cows. Her sister Hala (26) prepares for the day. She says that life in the village is a constant struggle for survival and she wish to live in a big city.



Darya Averchenko, Ukrainian journalist. Graduate of the Faculty of Journalism and TV-art at Kyiv International University. Correspondent of the independent newspaper *Ugoru* in Kyiv and journalist on the biggest Ukrainian newspaper *The mirror of the week*. Works for TV-channel K1. Since 2001, member of Kherson journalists union *The South* and since 2004, member of the National Journalists Union. Has participated in many photo exhibitions and competitions. Now works on the script for a documentary film.

# Sabre-toothed visa procedures or All girls are prostitutes

**Three years ago, Olya Bobenko, a student at Kharkiv University, wanted to visit her best friend Natalya, who had emigrated to Germany with her parents in the late 1990s. When Olya received her international passport, Natalya invited her for a vacation and sent her an official letter of invitation. In the queue to submit documents, Olya paid 70 hryvnias to a lawyer who undertook to fill out the visa questionnaire and gave her some short instructions: “At the interview: don’t lie, look them straight in the eyes, smile”...**

**Ten days later, when the girl was finally invited to the interview, she did not conceal that she was single, not employed anywhere, had both parents. Olya was refused a visa, no reason given. She was refused entry both on the occasion of Natalya’s wedding and the christening of her child. The girls still dream of seeing each other...**

Young, single Ukrainian females have always been the subject of particular scrutiny by embassy personnel. Who cares that our heroine was a top student, was fortunate to find a job, later got married. “She has already been refused a visa once. The embassy staff view her as a potential prostitute” – explains the lawyer, Halyna in the queue at the embassy (who requested that her surname be kept out of print).

- If an unmarried girl submits documents for her first visa to a Schengen Agreement country, her application is rarely approved – confirms Volodymyr Tsaruk, Director of the Information Centre, National Tourist Organisation. – Although there is no official split into young and

elderly Ukrainians, every consulate has certain restrictions on visa applicants. If you specify in the application that you are attending a conference, a business meeting or going abroad to study, you will usually be accepted. However, private travel, tourism without a booked package holiday or a meeting with friends may seem suspect to consulate employees. Sometimes even the customers of tour operators are refused if they do not have a credit account or traveller’s cheques. Now, what kind of an account could a student have, for example?.. If an Austrian or an Italian had to give their bank account number to the embassy, they would consider this a breach of their personal rights.

According to Mr Tsaruk, the latent restrictions imposed on Ukrainian youths by European embassies fail to stem the flow of illegal immigrants and do not reduce the scale of sexual slavery that Ukrainian girls fall victim to. Crooks organising semi-legal tours circumvent them, for example by buying documents from “their people” at embassies or smuggling girls out under false names. These activities should obviously be prevented in other ways. However, the stubborn employees of consulates of Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece and Great Britain are still trying to ‘fight’ them in their interview rooms.

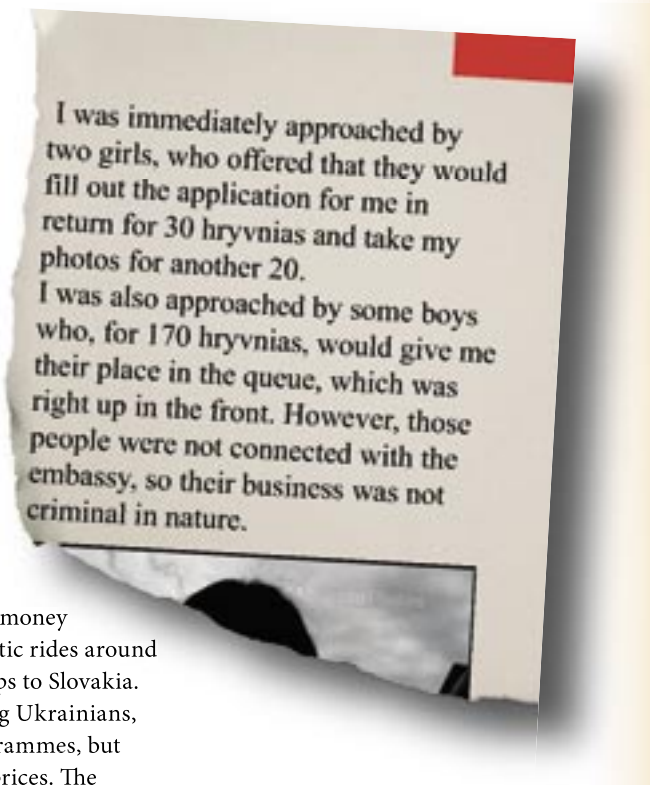
- This summer, they tightened their requirements regarding the document package even more – says Olena Netchyporenko, the visa department manager of the Gamaliya tour operator. – Traveller’s cheques or credit accounts became obligatory even for a week’s holiday in a Schengen Agreement country. Students have to provide their parents’ accounts. Some consulates have extended the application processing period to be able to scrutinise them better. Nevertheless, they have recently started supporting family trips – they say that family vacations strengthen the bonds.



That is a lot of progress in the consulates' activities. As recently as last winter, my 20 year old friend complained that their entire family filed documents for a Czech visa. Her father, mother and younger brother received their visas, but she did not. It did not help that her father is a member of parliament. The embassy refused to state the reason.

At the same time, following the May Decrees by which the Ukrainian President waived the visa requirement for EU states, the same Czech Republic opened its door to our tourists as a good neighbour gesture. It was later joined by Estonia, Slovakia and Latvia, which waived visa fees and simplified the procedures. As a result, the number of tourists visiting the Czech Republic has increased 2.5 times and is still growing. Tour operator employees expect that countries which have already given their approvals will maintain the simplified procedures until the end of the year. Their observations indicate that young people earning some money in the summer tend to spend it on romantic rides around Prague, rock festivals in Poland or ski trips to Slovakia. Germany is also a popular country among Ukrainians, mainly due to the student exchange programmes, but young people are still held back by high prices. The German Government has not yet reacted to our President's initiative.

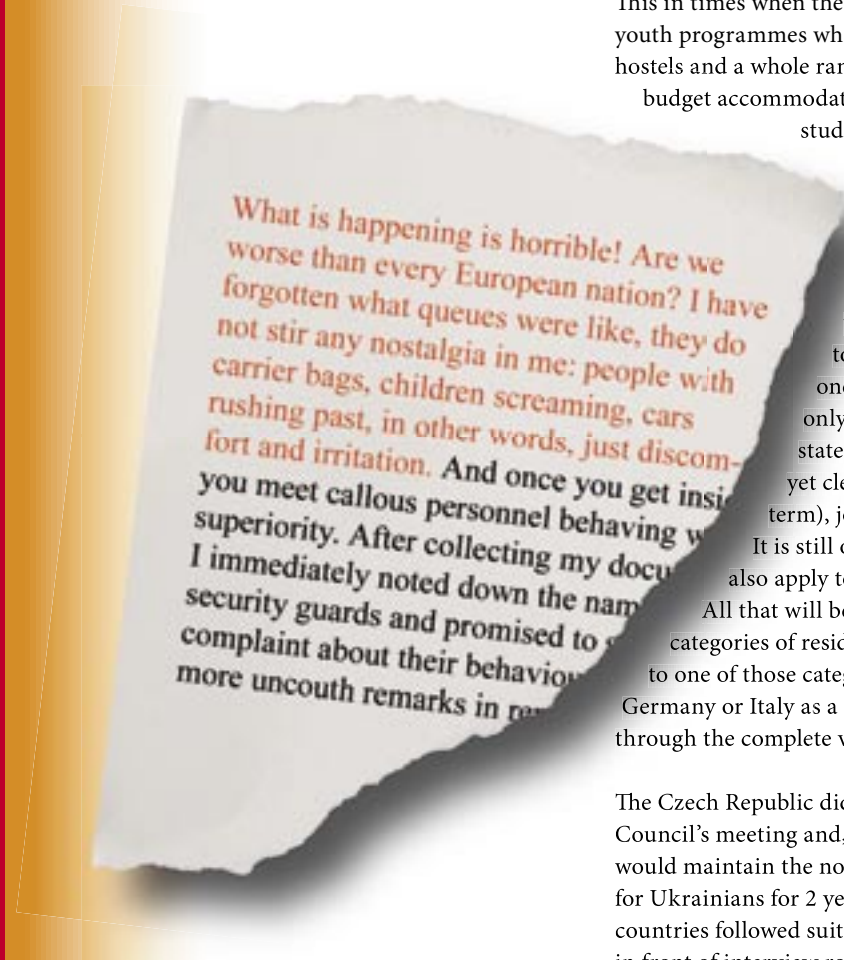
- After the Orange Revolution, the situation did not take a dramatic turn – V. Tsaruk continues – we are now distinguished from Russia, Belarus or Kazakhstan. However, without an EU Directive, it is doubtful that the “difficult” embassies would change their policies in the



light of the number of illegal immigrants from Eastern Europe. If a Ukrainian wants to see what life is like in Austria or Germany, he or she has to lie about staying at a five-star hotel. Otherwise he or she is considered unreliable. This in times when the entire world is benefiting from youth programmes which offer accommodation in student hostels and a whole range of rebates!.. You can even find

budget accommodation in Paris, as long as you are not a student from here. Our only hope lies in the European Council's meeting on co-operation between the Ukraine and the EU scheduled for November this year. That is when a declaration on simplifying the visa system for our citizens is to be approved. However, not every one will be able to relax, this applies only to four categories of residents: state officials, business people (it is not yet clear who exactly is covered by this term), journalists and exchange students. It is still open to question whether this will also apply to students who simply like to travel. All that will be approved will be a concept for four categories of residents. And when someone belonging to one of those categories wants to go to Austria, Germany or Italy as a tourist, he or she will still have to go through the complete visa application procedure.

The Czech Republic did not wait for the European Council's meeting and, on 23 August, announced that it would maintain the no-fee visa and a simplified procedure for Ukrainians for 2 years. So far, however, no other EU countries followed suit, so our people still have to queue up in front of interview rooms, telling one another frightening tales of stern consuls. Furthermore these queues present a disgraceful spectacle. There is something extremely debasing in all of this.





Meelis Kaldalu, journalist, comes from Estonia. In 1999 was the first nominee for the state stipendium for studies in semiotics. Author of articles about Social Networks, the Internet and related art fields in various Estonian newspapers and magazines. In 2004-5 took a TV-journalism course at Estonian Television. Meanwhile participates in different NGO's like *Young SIETAR*, *Dam Tan Dance Music Gallery* and the *Estonian Green Movement*. In his bedroom man can find a toothbrush.

Timo Toots, photographer from Estonia. Started with extreme sports photography and later got interested in street photography, as well as architecture and portraits. Has published his photos in Estonia's biggest daily newspapers *Postimees*, *Eesti Päevaleht*, *SL Õhtuleht*, *Äripäev* and in magazines. He is interested in natural(ly absurd) situations and visually attractive scenes.

# LOOKING FOR THE BORDER ISLAND

Daytrip on Lake Peipus around the Estonian – Russian temporary demarcation line

*Chroniclers of history, rejoice!*



Wild puppy with an enormous fish



## Introduction



This is Estonia. Russia to the right.



And this is Russia. Estonia to the left.



This is Lake Peipsi (or Peipus in English, or Chudskoe in Russian), the fifth largest lake in Europe (3555 km<sup>2</sup>), situated on the Estonian – Russian border.



If you look closely; in the middle of the water, where it gets narrow, you can spot an island there.

This island is called Piiressaar – Border Island (in English). And one beautiful Sunday morning, when the sun was shining, three friends decided to take an inflatable rubber boat and go there.

### TAKE I: The Rubber Boots

The first thing I noticed when I saw Egert, the skipper, was his pair of brand new rubber boots.

Meelis: “Perfect shoes!!”

Egert: “Yes, Man, figured out I had my ankles uncushioned and, being better off, got a real pair of these blues from the Hinnapomm.”<sup>1</sup>

Meelis (murmuring): “Watch out the brand, for heavens sake!”

Egert (wide grin): “So what, took a pair of “Winners”. They were the only ones.”

We loaded the inflatable rubber boat into the boot of my car, put the 8 horsepower Tohatsu engine on the back seat, and headed to the nearby non-central urban area where Hinnapomm was located, to grab a pair of real „Winners” for me and for Timo, the photographer, as well.

Meelis: “Think of the footwear as a perfect burglar alarm. You have one – you need the other.”

Egert: “And that’s still quite of a selling argument for a chunk of moulded rubber.”

Meelis: “Not a bad deal for dry socks at the end of a long day!”

Egert (grin): “Not so at all, my dear friend...”

I guess that we, two principal bachelors preparing our early September weekend vacation, already spread some smell of the freshwater waves of Lake Peipus. Together were quite appealing to the matter-of-fact counter-clerk in her thirties, as she added, handing over the precious merchandise:

Counter-clerk: “Well, actually we give no guarantee with these. But keep the bill, it’s valid for two years.”

Meelis: “So, there is the possibility of exchanging these for morphological reasons?”

Counter-clerk: “Let’s put it that way.”

Egert: “Alright!”

### TAKE II: Passage to the Shop with Everything

We met Timo in the city, where he had meanwhile spent the time shopping for second-hand goods.

Timo: “Good Gosh, gotta try these babies out! Guys, I owe you a big one.”

Meelis: “Did you grab another pair of these smooth Karhu’s?”

Timo: “No, I got these from the Garbage Man yesterday.”

Meelis: “So, are we not ready to run?”

Egert: “I still don’t have film for my analogue camera.”

Timo (inspecting the camera): “Smena...”

Egert: “Left my Lumix at home. You are the artists from the EU here.”

Timo: “Hehe, I got both of my Canons... But hey, turn right at the next one! I guess we’ll just see over to the Shop with Everything!”

Meelis: “The Shop with Everything?!?”

Timo: “Yes, right here. Opposite the department store.”

Egert: “You’re pretty sure I’ll get the film here?”

Timo: “This shop is special for two reasons. First, its got everything. And second, everything costs 25 kroons here.”

Meelis (grin): “If only we could check if the case is still protected from the sun’s rays...”

A visit to the Shop with Everything, where everything costs 25 EEKs, turned out to be a wonderful time off experience. Isn’t it a pleasure to find out, that when it has all disappeared, you can buy it back for 25 kroons from a man who looks like age is just a number, and has, of course, young preschoolers running around his shop, probably selling their family silver... No, we didn’t buy the

expensive KGB uniforms that were on sale in the left hand corner, nor the non-functioning camera sets for 25 EEK, because I had a better set of the same with film put aside for Egert, our skipper, at the factory, where I used to live. We drove there and got our stuff.

### TAKE III: Guard of the Harbour



...So, it was still that same wonderful day, when we arrived at the small winding Laaksaarõ harbour, about 53 kilometers from Tartu, where around 20 cars of people living or visiting the island were parked within the grove of trees and about 10 or 20 small motor boats lied alongside the narrow quarried channel leading to the lake. A few wooden summer cottages were being built on the campsite, but they looked like they would still be waiting to be finished the following season.

Egert (resolutely): “OK. Here we are now. If we want to get to the island, you better start pumping the boat – it’ll take us at least an hour to inflate it.”

Timo: “And where are you heading?”

Egert: “I’ll go talk to the Guard of the Harbour. He might know where we could find a compressor here.”



Timo: "And where are you going?"

Meelis: "My clothes are asking me to change them."

When I returned in about 10 - 15 minutes, Timo was still carrying on with the PumpStepper™, but I couldn't but notice that his enthusiasm had left him...

Meelis: "That's a heavy load of air here...but not so much in the boat..."

Timo: "Looks like the fat dube is holed or something. I must be sweating, umm, a quarter of an hour here..."

Meelis: "Did you find the Guard?"

Egert: "Yes, but I got nothing out of that chap. He might easily have been under the influence of ether. I've heard they drink it occasionally in this border zone of Russia."

Meelis: "Oh, really?!"

Egert (looking away): "...and he didn't speak any Estonian either..."

Meelis (taking a cluster of red grapes from his pocket):

"Can you hold these, Timo, and let me give it a try? I always thought I was a good miler back in junior high."

Timo: "Umm, thanks man, but hold on, there's a boat coming in... Let's ask the captain, maybe he knows!"

...

Egert (a few steps closer): "Excuse me, would you know, where we could find the Guard of the Harbour?"

Fisherman: "No, not really. Don't think so."

Egert: "Perhaps we could find a compressor here?"

Fisherman (practically): "No, no. I don't think so. What is your problem?"

Egert: "Well, we want to use the compressor to inflate the boat. We even have the special adapter for the compressor, you know? We don't want to spend an age inflating the boat manually, or rather with our feet, that is."

Fisherman (practically, anxiously): "There is something wrong with the way you are doing it."

Meelis: "Are you sure we are in the right port? Maybe we should drive to another place – a place where they have the compressor?"

Fisherman (practically, anxiously looking at Timo, who is, although worn out, still slowly stepping on the pump): "No, I don't think so. There is something wrong with the way you do it."

The captain had probably seen city folk like us before, but - might it be our truly amateur spirit - he was not keen to help us. Carefully listening and sensing the pump, he easily figured out our problem: the extra valve for the compressor was left inside the pump tube, and we had been carrying on a bootless effort, to which would once again tighten our loose schedule and shorten the daylight time we had left for the trip. We tried to tire out the captain with gratitude, but he quickly stood aside, not offering us another good-for-nothing word; just inspecting and sharing competent tips with his crew about our 8 horsepower compact Tohatsu engine. That was the first moment of clarity for me. As the boat was quickly taking shape, I decided to go and yet once more try to talk to the Guard of the Harbour.



He was not far away, just about 100 meters from us, walking the dog (or the other way around) and inspecting his territory, which must already have been so well known for him. At the point when I got to him, he was carried away in thoughts over an old fishing rod he had found in the bushes. He and the rod, they seemed so out of place to me that I couldn't help sensing the taste of a bream chowder in my mouth.

Meelis (in bad Russian): "Good day!"

Guard (in Russian): "Good day."

Meelis: "Do you know where we could use the compressor?"

Guard: "What?"

Meelis (even worse Russian): "You know, we have a boat. And we need air, you know?"

Guard: "Well, yes. I know. I will bring it to you."

I walked slowly back to the boat and started pushing the pedal again, feeling restless inside and trying to avoid questions from my mates. I was worried if the Guard had understood my plea. But no more than 100 strokes had passed, when he appeared again, with a fishing rod in one hand, and a classic black car pump in the other. I felt a great relief. With two pumps, we were almost floating. Timo took some pictures and everybody was in a jolly mood again.

Then, suddenly I understood that we had no idea where exactly we were heading. I changed turns with Egert and took out the last cluster of grapes from the waterproof sack to offer it to the Guard still wandering nearby.

Meelis (in simplified Russian, offering grapes): "Please, here you are!"

Guard (in Russian, obviously perplexed): "What?"

Meelis: "You know, its glucose."

Guard: "I know, I know." Tries the grapes and looks stunned. "Kids, don't you want to take a fibre boat instead?"

Meelis: "Do you have a boat here?"

Guard: "Do I have...None of them I haven't driven."

Meelis: "Fantastic!"

Guard: "But you are – extremists! Going on the lake with your boat, that is extreme sports. It is – adrenaline."

Meelis: "Thank you!"

Guard: "But call me when you need help. Its

getting dark soon. Then I will come and pick you up."

Meelis: "Oh, that is very kind of you!"

Guard: "Yes, call me and..."

Meelis (searching for the mobile phone): "Just a sec.. eh.. what is your number?"

Guard (confused, looking where to put the grapes): "Oh I forgot... I can't remember. I must go and recheck it from in the house."

Meelis: "Let's go! Oh no, don't leave the grapes!"

Meelis: "It is very green here. And quiet."

Guard: "Oh yes, its perfect!"

Meelis: "How long have you been here?"

Guard: "Been here... what do you mean?"

Meelis: ...

Guard: "Well, I've been here. Yes, 5, 6 um,..."

Meelis: ...

Guard: "Soon I've been here a year."

Meelis: "Umm... I wanted to ask... I've heard that people drink ether here when they want to get high. Is it true?"

Guard: "Ether? No, no. It's the Setus that do that. They live further down, at Lake Pskov. They do."

Meelis: "Oh, but what do you do here?"

Guard (smiling): "What do we do here? We grow onions."

We had passed the turn to the house, and the guard went inside to fetch the telephone number while I stayed by the balcony. Under it, interrupted by my existence, a small South Caucasian wolfhound puppy was dragging around a dead beam, nearly the same size as itself. "Cute puppy," I called him, "come here," but he timorously climbed further into the dark under the balcony and brought audible tender whispered but involuntary snarl.

This tender snarl stayed inside me, and I felt myself like the little innocent puppy, who was to become either a evil slave of the chain or brave master of the herd. I stood on the top stair and reached higher standing on my rubber toes, and I knew there was the water, but all I could see were trees, trees, trees. And I felt like bitten by the know-it-all tree; I suddenly knew why guards were put between borders, policemen between traffic and words between meanings.

They were to show you the way to the Border Island. Guard (pointing, right hand): "Keep straight on in that direction and you will not miss it!"



Meelis (pointing, left hand): "So, we just keep going straight on and we'll come across the border island, right?"



Walking back to the boat, it dawned on us, that we had forgot the telephone number. While I was waiting for the Guard to fetch it, a new motor boat arrived, two Russian speaking men jumped out of it and started to throw dead bream onto the brushwood, almost shouting and generally behaving as though under the influence of amphetamine. Timo tried to get more information about the weather on the lake, but unnoticed, he took some pictures instead.



The Guard reappeared, but bumped into one of the men on the way, and they discussed some fish related topics for a while.

Meelis: "Are they good guys?"  
Guard: "Yes, good guys. When they don't drink... They are very good guys, when they don't drink."  
Meelis: "Oh, this is the number!"  
Guard: "Yes, that is my number. Call me if you are in trouble and I will come and bring you back!"  
Meelis: "Spasibo Ogoromnoje!!!"  
Guard: "...and don't forget to call the border guards when you arrive."  
Meelis: "Oh, do you<sup>3</sup> have their number?"  
Guard (smiling): "Oh, I forgot!"



text: Meelis Kaldalu photos: Timo Toots

This man, outside his private life, of which we only saw a snowflake falling on an iceberg, is the Guard of the Harbour. He shows you the way to the Border Island, gives you his number should you need him and suggests you speak with the Border Guards. All you have to do is ask him for some air and offer him a cluster of red grapes in return. If he is inclined to forget the numbers, this is because he is still lost in his thoughts about whose fishing rod it was that he has just stumbled upon.

#### TAKE IV: After-Battle Of The Ice

After a few warm-up runs along the channel, we loaded the provisions into the waterproof sack and Egert finally drove us out to the great blue plain. Egert: "What are you looking at?"  
Meelis: "I was wondering about the engine, how



many gears does it have?"  
Egert: "Three. Forward, backwards and neutral. Do you wanna try?"  
Meelis: "Most certainly, if you trust me to!"  
Egert (smiling): "I would prefer to stay in control, but I have a little green friend, who needs my attention, too."  
It was the first time I had driven the 8 horsepower



text: Meelis Kaldalu photos: Timo Toots

Tohatsu, or any other similar engine. I was looking around to see the white horses, and as we gained distance, I first spotted them in front, and then at the back of the boat. We were driving in turns, and only stopped to change position. The boat was actually a little bit small for the three of us, but after a sluggish start, the engine did a sturdy job and ran well. We might have been under way for half an hour or so, when the coastline disappeared and we decided to stop and lean back for a while to enjoy the view. Indescribable peace and harmony settled over us while



we were counting the different blues in the picture before us with utmost pleasure. We decided to call the event our "Departure into Bluedom", and Egert passed around the Jägermeister while I found a box of cottage cheese with some chives to go with it from the bag. The sight was idyllic.

Meelis: "What would you guys do if I took a strip of LSD out of the pocket right now?"  
Timo: "If you have it, we are forced to remove the evidence. Remember, we're in the border zone!"  
Egert (in a dreamy voice): "Right now, I would not mind becoming a wave myself. Or turning into a meerscham." Timo: "I think that it is harder and harder to retain your personality in today's world of drugs, where each season, or even each month, tens of different psychotic molecules are designed and made available in e-shops."  
Meelis: "Was that the reason you weighed your head last



time at Egert's birthday? Its good that you brought it up. I am still curious if it was a plain and simple attempt to measure your intellect or a more archetypal cry for understanding?"

Timo: "Look who's talking! If I remember right, you were spitting half-chewed Lay's onto the faces of your friends that night... Could we smell a communication problem there?"

Meelis: "Words are not quite always enough to show your feelings..."

Egert (curiously): "But what would you do if you had a strip of LSD in your pocket right now?"

Meelis: "I would wait until we get to the Border Island."

Timo (looking into binoculars): "Which I am right now trying to spot."

Timo: "Guys, are you sure we are heading in the right



direction? I think not."

Egert: "What do you see?"

Timo: "If we continue straight on, we might run into the gates of Vladivostok, or wherever. If we turn 90 degrees left, there is at least a church, or is it a lighthouse..."

Meelis: "But it's far too small to be the Border Island. It is probably just an islet."

Egert: "We must go closer to get a better look."

Egert (observing): "Suddenly, the coastline has divided. Where we saw *terra incognita*, there now lies three islands."

Timo: "There are two Russian islands between Border Island and the mainland, I remember from the map."

Meelis: "These might as well be Estonian islets which are just too small to be mapped. I still assume that Border Island is right in front of us. I think the harbour is further to the right, by the radio mast over there."

Egert: "It's getting windy. I've heard that weather can change within five minutes on Peipus. We need a fast decision here."

Meelis: "In that case, let's continue straight ahead. That is where the coast is the nearest."

Meelis (alarmed): "What are those hanks doing over there?! Should I slow down?"

Timo: "These must be the Gates of Vladivostok now. Sing and celebrate Russia, our Motherland!"

Egert: "Take it slowly! We are running into fishing nets, and we better avoid tangling the engine."

Meelis (takes a sharp turn): "I cannot avoid a collision. Help!!!"

Egert: "Just stop the engine now! I'll take over."

We revved up the engine, manoeuvred through the nets with paddles, and continued our crusade. In about 10 – 15 minutes, we finally ran ashore, just as happy as we were unsure about our location.

Egert (lighting a cigarette): "Welcome to Marlboro Country!"



Timo: "At least with Sandy Beaches"

Meelis: "If we're in Russia, we might as well relax and wait for the chopper. Otherwise we should

find a place for the boat."

Egert: "I doubt if the radar can spot a rubber boat."

Meelis: "Just in case, I'll turn my life-vest into blue. Its better to avoid any confusion."

Timo (checking his cell phone): "Hey! I have 2 new SMS. Yeah, Welcome to RusTel Networks!!"

Egert: "Do you have colour WAP?!"

Meelis: "I do have colour WAP"

Egert: "Let's try to locate ourselves through the EMT Go! portal."

Meelis: "I thought that it's good for finding the nearest ATM's or gas stations. I doubt if there's any in the vicinity"

Egert: "Trust me with it. They have map support."

Meelis: "Here you are. I'll have an analogue look around here, while you try to bit us out."

Egert: "Right. Don't get lost."

I descended a few steps into the coastal grass, and had already lost sight of my friends. The bulrush thicket was high and closed around me, but I found a narrow dry path and leapt forward to get a better view. Going along, I became overcome by an awkward levity, which felt like losing some of the effects of gravity, but as I was so excited about everything around me, I considered it to be the after effects of the landfall and didn't stop walking. In a few minutes, I reached higher ground and had a view of the neighbourhood.

It was a magnificent sight. The path was soon to disappear into the bulrushes, which covered the whole plateau. Only a few elm trees were immersed in it, severely disfigured by the wind from the lake, almost turning them into Japanese ikebana, in sharp contrast with the overall lack of interference. They had probably invaded the field from the thick coniferous forest which spread out on the horizon, slowly wreathing the landscape to embrace the lake from both sides. Far right, a radio mast signalled the only signs of human presence over the forest.

Was this really the Border Island?

I stood frozen, mouth open, sensing the unbearable lightness which had crept all over me and was slowly knitting my thoughts into dream-like matter. The warm September wind was gently swaying the bulrushes, and nearly blowing into my lungs. I was not sure if I could handle the situation. I was not sure if I was not dreaming. "What the heck," I mumbled, "I must move." And I suddenly felt like a little boy.

I was 5 years old, and it was quiet hour in the kindergarten. Everybody, except me, was sleeping. Or perhaps some were just pretending to be asleep, but I was the only one who had earned the exclusive permission to stay out of bed and read in the library. I was in passionate love with my very first book. A real book, not the counterfeit picture album they bored us with in class.

No, it was a real book, not a comic strip or fairy tale. No, it was my mother's old history textbook which I had found in my grandparents' farm house during the summer holidays. A comprehensive guide to the history of Our Homeland for Form 6 or 7, starting from the pre-historic era of mammoth hunts and sabre-toothed tigers and continuing up to the future of communism, where rivers were running backwards from the sea, and everybody went happily together shopping for free after a day's work in the factory; a lyrical book to teach the millions and millions of Soviet kids about the great past and future of the Russian - Soviet nation, neatly packed with historical facts. By the time that Kiev and Novgorod began to unite other principalities around them, I had become completely habituated to the plot, and thirstily ingested every new battle, invention and development; flying on the magic red carpet through years, decades and centuries.

But now, dark black clouds had risen from the Mongolian steppes over Motherland Russia. The barbarian cavalry of ruthless Chingis Khan was quickly forging along towards the heart of the country, subordinating principality after principality. At the same time, German Teutonic knights



treacherously decided to use the harsh situation to pursue their hideous plans to eliminate the Russian threat forever. They began the offensive from the west, conquering Pskov and threatening Novgorod, massacring kids and raping women on their way.

In deepest woe, insolent boyars were forced to join their forces and form a common army to protect them from complete oblivion. Altogether 15,000 men converged under the leadership of 20-year-old Alexander Nevsky, a charismatic and unsullied commander. Heartened by their courageous leader, the Russian army ambushed the Teutonic knights at Pskov, forcing them to withdraw to their recently conquered Livonian estate, where they immediately began preparations for a general attack and convinced Denmark to ally with them.

In the beginning of April 1242, the army, commandeered by Prince-Bishop of Dorpat<sup>4</sup>, Hermann I of Buxhoeveden and consisting of Teutonic “Sword Brothers”, Danes, Livonian feudal knights, and local footmen, departed from Dorpat. Warned in time by his spies, Prince Alexander waited on the Eastern side of Lake Peipus, at the place where it was narrowest, assuming that the enemy would take the most direct course to Novgorod, and was planning to cross the ice-covered lake on the way.

This all appeared to me in a momentary glimpse, as clearly as I had held the book in my hands again. I could even visualize the diagram of the battleground on the yellowing, starchy and stained sheets of the textbook. The next moment, I heard the roar of the battle in my ears; the ringing of fanfares, hacking of swords, thumping of armour, shrieks, cries, neighs... the battle was a fever all around me. I lost the last glue holding me back as the vortex of the battle sucked me into it. I started to run irresistibly along the path, and when it ended, I still charged forward through the bulrushes, eyes twisted and mind exalted by the fierce despair, destruction and agoraphobia of the battleground.

I must have run for a few hundred metres, when the roar

of the battle faded away and a crystal clear voice came through calling my name. This was a personal call to action to all the billions of cells in my body, signed by the all-mighty adultery herself. I felt like a stream of energy had been injected into my weightless blood. The wide open field narrowed in my imagination, at the same time as the gloomy forest spread to both sides of the horizon in my attempt to grasp it. I leapt forward.



Excerpt from “Alexander Nevsky” (1938, Sergei Eisenstein)

Another hundred metres might have passed when the vague palpitations of a boat engine got caught in my head, and simultaneously I heard the cry of my name for a second time. My friends were calling me. I knew I had to choose. I stopped and closed my eyes in front of the forest. I felt momentarily sick of running. What should I do? Where should I go, who will I meet, and what would I become? Will I be remembered, or will I remember? Why am I here, after all? Emptiness came, as came the knowing that I am not able to choose. I will never forgive myself if I leave my friends. I will hate them forever if I turn around. Where is my squire to turn to? Why aren't the

fanfares calling, where are the flags? Where is the enemy whom I need to attack?

Gravity returned and I felt like I sank into the soft ground of the shore. All of a sudden, my name was called for a third time. A palatalized hair-raising voice penetrated to the marrow of my bones.

“Mjiiieeeeeeljis!!!”

I shivered.

On the early morning of April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Russians went to the Voron stone, moving across the ice. At dawn the knights and Chudes<sup>5</sup> who were helping them came to the ice field. Mounted knights used the compact “pig’s snout” scheme of attack which had always helped them defeat infantry. The “snout” drove through the Russian infantry but the knights were immediately surrounded by Russians. The Russian cavalry gave them the last blow. According to the chronicle 400 knights and numerous Chudes perished. Those who remained alive were pursued up to the Western shores of the Lake. The ice was thin and many fleeing knights wearing heavy armour fell through it and drowned.

“Mjiiieeeeeeeeeeljis!!!!!!”

I don't know what would have happened if I had stayed there. I turned around, and ran, ran, ran leaning forward, ran back for my life.

Trying to zip up the open pocket of my rain jacket on the run, I dropped the spoon, which I had put there during the “Departure into Bluedom”. I slackened my footfall, and looked back to spot it, but it had fell into the high grass, and I didn't feel like stopping to search for it.

I ran to the coast.



“The Battle of the Ice” by Julia Zatanina (Samara Art School, 13 years)

Meelis: “What happened? Did I hear a chopper?”  
Timo: “Some fishermen passed by with their boat.”

Meelis: “Any idea of our location?”

Egert: “No clues here. Seems like we're out of the map or something.”

Meelis: “Basically, we have two choices.”

Timo: “Yes?”

Meelis: “Chase the boat, or wait for a new one. Trekking through the forest would take us ages.”

Egert (driving the boat): “Try to spot the flag!”

Timo (looking into the binoculars): “I think its Estonian.”

Meelis: “I doubt if we can reach them, if they don't reduce speed.”

Egert: “Let's try and catch their attention! Hold the rudder, Mel! I'll take off my white T-shirt.”

Egert (waving the T-shirt): “Looks like they stopped!”

Meelis: “Hehe, have a look at the flag of this floating tank of scrap metal...”

Timo: “Whoops, it's upside down”

Egert: “Are these humans or orcs?”

Timo: "Their boss is smiling. The sun is reflecting from his gold teeth"

Meelis: "No Panic!"

Meelis (in Russian): "Good health!"

Gold Teeth (in Russian): "Good health! Privet!"

Meelis: "Can you tell us, where is Piirissaare?"

Gold Teeth: "Piirissaare?"

Meelis: "Yes, we are looking for the Border Island."

Gold Teeth (pointing far left): "Look behind me, then. Here you'll find no Border Island!" He crosses fingers for # sign.

"Here you can find this, boys" The crew bursts into laughter.

Meelis: "A thousand thanks! Can we take a picture of you?"

Gold Teeth: "Go ahead boys! We are sailors, but you had better take off quickly from here!"



We took off to follow his advice. As we managed to turn the boat around, the Russian fishermen had started off as well, losing any interest they might have had in us. We were half a kilometer from the Russian coast, and by all assumptions, still in Russian territorial waters.



Egert's words about the weather proved true and the blue became mixed with black. The first droplets of nausea invaded our membranes.

Everybody was suddenly focused and sharp. There was not a second thought of our destination any more – the small dot on the left, that we had misjudged in the first place, was Border Island.

We were on the move again, but this was no joyride any more. The wind had whipped up the waves, and three people was really the utmost limit for the boat. Every now and then I cried "Wave!", and it came to boost our spirits, clothes and supplies with a wet "Hello!". Timo found a scoop from the floor and started the fight with the excess



water. Egert tried to find the lightest balance at the front of the boat, and sitting with his back to the prow, ignored the threats.

Here we were. Tim and Mel. Two guys in a storm on a lake with a keen desire to become more professional. Wanting to realize their wild ideas. Or to "Jump, Laugh & Develop" as it says on Tim's photopage at <http://timo.dart.ee>. No intention to harm others. Let it be open source software for turning useless old monitors into *haute couture* collector items or previous generation P2P with personality, where nods exchange real matter through the post.

And over there was Egert. Leaning to the future, eyes closed, and clouds like fluffy angel wings at his side. One of the sweetest, I guess, if boys were marshmallows. Searcher of Freedom. Rider of the Storm and The One Who Knows How To Bring Forth The Good Side. Ever changing and never bored, he was badly splashed that day, but only God knows if he did or did not enjoy it deep inside.

Driving, driving, driving; I felt how I slowly turned into an animal. We had used up almost all of the gasoline, and were completely wet. One moment I noticed a lonely buoy on our left side, probably demarcating the temporary border line. Obsession was the only tool to grasp, and I fixed my eyes on the cross of the church, and, clenching the handle of the tiller, decided that if any of the gyrating seagulls will fly through the middle of it, God exists.

None of them did, but nevertheless, we reached the Island, and once again had to take precautions to avoid the fishing nets. But it was not so difficult, really. We were looking for a good spot to land when we noticed a guy waving at us. He was standing on board an old wrecked cargo ship, the "Titanic". We wanted to paddle in a straight line to get closer, but he pointed to the sheltered creek in the shade of some willows where a flotilla of small fishing boats were at rest.



Meelis: "Such a trip! Pleasure to see you! Finally on Border Island, right?!"

Egert: "Uh, it was harsh!"

Timo: "Soaking wet, but alive!"

Border Guard: "Off the boat, one-by-one! Take out your identification!! Go nowhere!!!"

We had a reason to take his words seriously. He was wearing a pistol on his belt.

## THE END

While following journalistic method and principles, all text and photos in the above text are fictional

(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Hinnapomm (Price Bomb) is a cheap Hong Kong counterfeit goods chain in Estonia

<sup>2</sup> "Utmost Alouded out loud Thanks" a very respectful, but yet very personal phrase of thanks with several prosodic and somatic markers; one of the most phenomenal miracles of the Russian language.

<sup>3</sup> Second person adjectives ("Sina") are written with an initial capital letter in Estonian courtesy addresses. But we must remember that there are different words for the singular ("Sina") and plural/honorific ("teie") forms of second person in Estonian.

<sup>4</sup> Name of Tartu under German rule.

<sup>5</sup> Name of Estonians in Old Russian.



Anastasia Kanarska, Ukrainian journalist. Graduate in Journalism from the National University in Lviv. Cooperated with: *Niedila, Niedila – plus, Z vilnu Ukrainu, Arka, Switlo, Hram, Viruyu, Ratusha, Narodoznavchi zoshyty*. Worked for the daily newspaper *Postup* as a cultural observer and editor of the cultural department. Since 2005 works on the Lviv art monthly *LunArt*. Her areas of interest concern: art, theatre and literature.

You know,  
I would leave  
anyway

Dusk is falling... We are sitting in one of Lviv's cafes. My old friend has come from Germany. We have known each other since we were kids. We have many common friends, memories and views. However, an invisible wall has grown between us, for which there is only one short but ambiguous word: a border. We bounce words from one end of the table to another like ping pong balls. Suddenly, an unexpected sentence of him hangs in the air: "Over here, where you live..." Over here, where we live...

When does this unexpected border form between people? When does your fatherland become abroad? I don't think this can be detected. We live in the same town, we listen to the same music, swap books and ideas, dream... Life goes on... Sometimes uncontrollably fast, sometimes the change is almost invisible, like in slow motion. Maybe, during those slow motion sequences every one of us dreamed, once at least, to cross the border to the West and ... stay there for good. And there were hundreds of arguments to support this: because it is easier to reach your goals, life is easier and in addition the world is your oyster. Someone forgot this passing dream of theirs, someone

Мій друг зустрів жінку своєї мрії у Німеччині. Там підростає їхня маленька доня, яка ще не розуміє, що Україна це щось гірше і нижче від Німеччини. Захоплено сприймає український світ, якимось тремтливо-ніжно вимовляє свої перші українські слова. "Ангелик" – шепочуть її уста, і я вже не розумію, до кого вони звернені, до Ангела чи... України. Її оченята світлі і променисті. В них я знаходжу надію.



Having escaped from the internal border of the coach you get under the ironic, jeering scrutiny of the border guards of both sides. No one knows why border guards of both countries think themselves superhuman, demigods almost.

else pursued it persistently. Thus my generation branched into two worlds on the two sides of the border. Just a couple of years ago it seemed that all those borders did not hinder us, as everyone would be able to travel wherever they wanted without any visa problems. So it did seem. Life, however, likes to surprise us, not always pleasantly. It turned out that an ecstatic Ukrainian does not find it easy to get a visa, even to the former communist states. The majority of my peers are still prisoners of circumstance which prohibits us from travelling the world, so they look at the border like at a tempting treat that somehow we cannot take a bite of. Just to imagine a taste of the “western” life they take a trip to the next country across the border, Poland or Hungary, if only for a weekend. So you get on a bus, which is almost empty in Lviv but gets overcrowded by the time you approach the border. People go to earn money for their subsistence: sell a bottle of vodka, a carton of cigarettes, buy something needed and return home. They give no thought to historical buildings or museums, as their thoughts are on earning their daily bread. Sometimes, possibly, not just bread, but also some creature comforts. In that case, someone will certainly approach you with a request to hold an additional carton of cigarettes or another bottle of vodka for them. Your refusal will be received as ... the position of a rich man who cannot understand the needs of the poor. Even though you have probably never had the kind of money that those everyday border migrants have. The border starts growing even in this one bus, in which compatriots cease to understand one another as if they were speaking different languages. How do you cross this internal border that requires no visa?

Having escaped from the internal border of the coach you get under the ironic, jeering scrutiny of the border guards of both sides. No one knows why border guards of both countries think themselves superhuman, demigods almost. Your communications with those “demigods” will leave you shaken for a long time. So on your westward weekend journey you will stay under the impression of the demigod meeting. You will admire shop windows, flowers, smiling passers-by, to find yourself several hours later at the border, where smiles are in short supply and kindness is rare. And further on: the dark night, hopeless roads and weird memories. You will await messages from your friends on the Web.

You will laugh and cry with them, share plans and dreams. At time like that it will seem that there are no borders: just wait for the morning, board a coach or a train and set out... Forget your dreams. Remember the visa. A strange, happy voice at the consulate will reply “No, not yet, you have not been granted a visa yet” leaving you in the endless wait. You will walk around your town, trying to look at it through the eyes of an enchanted tourist, you will envy the never ending stream of tourists who need not overcome any difficulties en route to your home city and you will keep getting used to your circumstance. Still no visa, autumn starting outside your window... Snow will soon drift along your streets. Winter seems to like staying in our city for at least six months now. In the snow storms you will forget your dreams, living in the reality of your life. What is a border? It is a line between you and the homes of your friends whom you somehow cannot manage to visit.

So we have our coffee in the cafes of our home town. We are shocked by their “here, where you live”, we cannot accept their insufferably critical view of our reality, which used to be theirs just a few years back. Two of us at the table, split by the invisible border of different realities. My friend has met the woman of his dreams in Germany. It is where their little daughter is growing up, not yet understanding that Ukraine is someplace worse and inferior to Germany. She admires the Ukrainian world with rapture, pronounces her first Ukrainian words with this warmth and care. “Angel” whispers her mouth, and I no longer understand who she is addressing: the Angel or ... Ukraine. Her eyes are bright and radiant. I find hope in them. The six-month-long snowstorms no longer seem so frightening. I know, I believe that one day, the west will not outweigh the east at the borderline. But then the same words sound again: “Over here, where you live”. And I feel like shouting: “Over here, where we live: it’s not a curse!”. Over here flowers smell sweet, hearts are open and the sky is boundless... But why get sentimental?! “You know, I would leave anyway”, sounds brutally honest as dusk falls over my home town.



Mindaugas Kavaliauskas, photographer and art historian; speaks 6 European languages. Has the professional name MiKas and lives and works in Kaunas, Lithuania. MiKas is the founder and director of Kaunas Photo Days, the first festival of photography in Lithuania and of the F Galerija gallery of photography in Kaunas. Since 1993 he has been a member of the Union of Art Photographers of Lithuania and presently is a member of its advisory board. Mindaugas lectures on photography at regular workshops at F Galerija and at the Kaunas University of Technology while advertising photography constitutes a significant part of his activity. Among many titles, he is official photographer to the oldest basketball club in Europe, BC Žalgiris.

And they really were 'different'. Arrival in the reserved villa caused a cultural shock. The two rooms we had rented were a catastrophe for 4-year-old Ignas and 2-year-old Rokas, but they were a real treasure for their photographer father and sociologist mother. Both jokingly and seriously we started facing the reality of Soviet heritage and experiencing the specific city based on its commodities.

# Candy Villa

## Time Travellers

Planning holidays and booking your seaside residence on the Internet is one of the sweetest summer dreams. Lithuania is not rich in seashore. Consequently at the height of the season most of the villas in Palaga, Šventoji are fully booked. Therefore my wife and I were rather happy to be sure we'd be able to spend some 'different' summer days with our kids.





For the first night, when the storm was rising, we had to ask the caretaker to attach a piece of cloth on one window, because the glass was broken and it did not close properly. The windows themselves represented a masterpiece of the fading Soviet resort architecture: they were not really windows, nor doors to the balconies.



The time to change our eight-month-old Simas' nappy inevitably came, and we noticed that hot water was available only during certain periods—mornings and evenings. This was far from being the only reminder of the glorious times of this villa, built in the early eighties.





The rooms that looked almost spacious in the daylight turned into clumsy, poorly-lit spaces. I remember this from the holidays on which my parents would take me when I was a kid – there were never enough bulbs. The bad ones were usually replaced by good ones from the multi-bulb chandeliers. The absence of toilet paper, as the omnipresent sign of public space in the Soviet times, meant that we were really stuck in time travel. Beyond the basic lack of comfort, there was an immense space for meditation about the aesthetics and taste standards of the Soviet intelligentsia. The hotel keeper told us that this villa had initially belonged to the candy factory. We said we had an idea how the contemporary owners could promote the place, by marketing their villa as a zone for time travellers - a utopian idea, explored in the novels and movies throughout the 20th century. Soviet nostalgia is a part of pop fashion nowadays...

The reply was that ideas were not lacking, but the owners had dozens of such villas and they were not really bothered by increases in sales. The idea of coming to Šventoji is going to the seaside, and not staying in a villa. Why not? Time travellers wanted!





Wojciech Kość, freelance Polish journalist. Graduate of the Faculty of Political Science and English Literature (The University of Silesia, Katowice). He mostly writes for *Transitions Online*, *Environment Daily* and *Czech Business Weekly*. Interested in cross-border political and environmental issues and minorities in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine.

# A Border Crossing to Nowhere

BIAŁOWIEŻA, Poland – Thick forest towers above an asphalt road few miles east from Białowieża, far into Poland’s eastern corners. This is where the European Union ends. Or begins, as people say here. Another few minutes and Belarus will bid welcome to visitors. Few miles away, a newly opened border crossing has been in operation since April.

But hardly any traffic goes through here. The road seems forgotten.

English language is helpless to describe the impenetrable mass of green that somehow just stops short of invading the road. The Lonely Planet guidebooks that some British people were studying on the bus to Białowieża earlier this morning say “it’s the largest original lowland forest in Europe”. True, but the Polish word for this “forest” is *puszcza* (pronounced “push-cha”). It contains it all: the size, the thickness, the mystery, the awe.

The notion that *puszcza* doesn’t contain, however, is the border. Be it Poland or Russia, the forest

English language is helpless to describe the impenetrable mass of green that somehow just stops short of invading the road. The Lonely Planet guidebooks that some British people were studying on the bus to Białowieża earlier this morning say “it’s the largest original lowland forest in Europe”. True, but the Polish word for this “forest” is *puszcza* (pronounced “push-cha”). It contains it all: the size, the thickness, the mystery, the awe.

had been more or less in one piece until after WW2, when an arbitrarily drawn border between Poland and the USSR cut through the middle of the forest like a surgeon's scalpel through the flesh.

The border didn't discriminate too much: families would end up in two different countries overnight. The cut had a large number of Belarussians remain on the Polish side, their towns and villages located either in or close to the forest.

It is the Belarussian minority in Poland that is today's major force in the struggle to diminish the weight between Poland and Belarus. The weight that is strikingly visible in the case of the Białowieża forest, ripped with fence and barbed wire.

A surgical cut eventually heals. But here, the two parts of a unique wonder of nature, a living witness to what Europe looked like centuries ago, are slowly growing apart from each other. So are the people. Janusz Korbel, an architect-turned-environmentalist, who settled in Białowieża four years ago, says that one cannot compare the two parts anymore.

Asked about the Belarussian side, he says: "Let's talk about the Polish side. At least you can work for improvement here." Korbel dreams of the whole Polish part of the forest becoming a national park. Reluctantly, he adopts the Polish/Belarussian division, even if he dreams that no group lays its claim on the forest, featuring on the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

"I fear for nature every time I hear it belongs to a nation or some other group," he says.

But for Belarussians on either side of the border, the forest is something more than an environmental treasure that is there to stay for its own sake. Late Czesław Miłosz, Polish

poet and the Nobel Prize winner, likened the Białowieża forest to the royal castle of Wawel in Krakow, the symbol of Polish statehood. The forest has similar symbolic weight among Belarussians.

In Minsk, Belarus' bustling capital city of 2 million people, an impromptu street survey proved this fact quickly.

"What do you think best symbolizes Belarus?"

"Białowieża!", came an instant reply from Uladzimir Kudrytski, 53, an artist. "Everything's there! It's nature, it's our history. It's so powerful," he said. Several, nearly identical reactions followed.

"Looking for something that embodies Polishness, Poles can refer to Wawel, while Belarussians refer to the Białowieża forest. Simply speaking, this is their Wawel," said Adam Wajrak, Polish journalist who, like Korbel, decided to settle in the forest.

The comparison to Wawel became famous in the context of brutal exploitation of the forest. On the Polish side, only some 10 per cent of the whole area is part of the Białowieża National Park. The rest is subject to commercial tree felling, even if limited. "It's as if we were taking the Wawel apart for bricks," Miłosz wrote.

Getting to know what's going on the other side is tough. Belarussian president Alexander Lukashenka's autocratic regime is far from transparent. Walking through the forest nearly every day – and sometimes spending the night

there, a piece of waterproof cloth making for a shelter – Korbel regularly sees the dramatic effects of human activity, but can only guess what is going on beyond the border.

There, the whole forest area is nominally a national park, but according to Korbel, the regime had smelled the money in tree-cutting long ago. Penetrating the Belarussian part of the forest is difficult, though.

Perhaps this is why Jaudosia Lemiesz, a 19-year old student of medicine and a Belarussian minority activist, has not yet been to the other

Young people, like Jaudosia, could have fallen victims to poor cooperation between people responsible for the forest on both sides of the border. "They meet, drink some vodka and that's it," says Korbel. "It's us who can make a difference," says Jaudosia. "But it's so slow, we're like waves, slowly gnawing at the rock," she adds. But will there be anything to care for before the waves finally do their work?

"Don't even say that," Jaudosia says.

So far, the rock is hard to gnaw at. Right beyond the border crossing, a bus pulls up. A Belarussian border guard emerges. "Where are you going?" he asks. "To Kamieniuki," goes the answer. Kamieniuki is the nearest village, where

## Late Czesław Miłosz, Polish poet and the Nobel Prize winner, likened the Białowieża forest to the royal castle of Wawel in Krakow, the symbol of Polish statehood. The forest has similar symbolic weight among Belarussians.

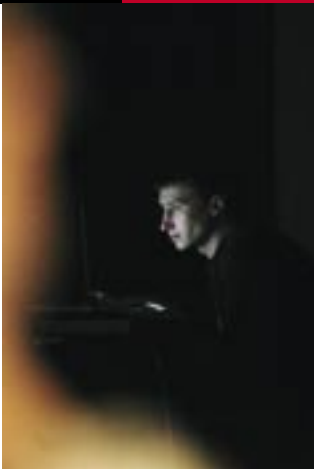
side of the Białowieża forest. Jaudosia lives in Hajnowka, a town of 24 thousand people, a popular gateway to the Polish part of the forest and also an active hub of Belarussian ethnic minority in Poland.

"Most of the Belarussians I know haven't been there, either," she says. "The forest on the other side is not that open. But truly speaking, I don't know what the other side is like," she says.

the headquarters of the Belarussian Białowieża National Park are located. "You can't go there just like that," the officer says. "The crossing is only for organized groups. Get on the bus," he orders.

The bus soon rambles on the road, heading for Kamieniuki, where tourists can visit a museum, all under control. Once they have finished, the bus takes them back to the border. So much for this part of the Białowieża forest and the border crossing that anybody can cross – just.





Andrei Liankevich, photographer from Grodno. Bachelor of Economy (Belarusian State University in Minsk). Participated in several seminars, including the 8-month *World Press Photo* seminar in Yerevan (Armenia). Worked as an Internet site manager. Cooperated with *Vybiraj* campaign, youth journal *CD* and *Leader* journal. Now is a photographer in *Nasha Niva* newspaper and *Komsamolskaja Pravda v Beloryssii*.

# Border Children

The photo-story "Children on the border" shows the life of the children of the Belarussian frontier guards, who live together with their parents in frontier posts. Frontier posts are in immediate proximity to the frontier in woods, frequently tens of kilometers from settlements, as, for example, all the frontier posts in Belovezskaja. Children spend most of their time in the frontier posts, leaving them only for school in nearby villages. Due to this, children accept indirect participation in the protection of the border in what pass as occupations within the framework of the program "The Young Assistant to the Frontier Guard".



Fifth year schoolboys from the Gertshanskaja high school are engaged within the framework of the program "The Young Assistant to the Frontier Guard" in the frontier post "Kotelnja-Bojarskaja", the Brest Krasnoznamenaja border group named Feliks Edmyndovich Derzinskij, Brest region.



Lieutenant Sergey Mamrovskij, his wife Dar'ja with daughters Natasha (12) and Eugenija (4), watch TV in their apartment in the frontier post "Pogranichnyj" in the settlement Pogranichnyj, Berestovitskogo district, Grodno region.



Sergeant Olga Tadeushevna Fejtser with her son Alexey (2) in their house in the city of Brest, the Brest Krasnoznamennaja border group named Feliks Edmyndovich Derzinskij.





Alexander Nikolaevich Kivachitsky (27), ensign of the frontier post "Mogilevskajav" feeds his twins Peter and Paul in the village of Dobrovolja, Grodno region.



Pupils of fifth classes Gertshanskaja high school play on parade ground within the framework of the program "The Young assistant to the frontier guard" on frontier post "Kotelnja-Bojarskaja", the Brest Krasnoznamennaja border group named Feliks Edmyndovich Derzinskij.





Janna Meazina, journalist and photographer from Moldova. In 2005 finished studies at the Faculty of Philology at the Transnistrian State University. Worked as a correspondent on the *Hmelnik-guarantor* newspaper in Hmelnik and *Case* newspaper in Tiraspol. Now is a correspondent and editorial assistant on youth politics and social affairs in *The New Newspaper* and editor of the political department in the independent Transnistrian weekly newspaper *Trade-union messages*. Likes cats, motorcycles, rock music and classical literature.

# MUSIC WITH NO BOUNDARIES

He is the Master of Ceremony tonight. He got on stage and proudly announced, “We are surrounded by borders. We are suppressed by the economy. Politicians, their ambitions and demands divide us. But we have one great thing in common – music. They want to teach us how to hate each other, make us enemies and maybe even start a new war but as long as rock is alive we will be friends. We do not want to fight. We want to be united. And we will have that peace! We don’t give a damn about borders, language differences and politicians’ wishes. Heavy Metal rules!”



The 4<sup>th</sup> International Rock-Festival “Music With No Boundaries” took place on 4 September at the Tkachenko Palace of Culture in the city of Bender. It was attributed to the Republic Day of Belarus. This spectacular event gathered together not only local Dnestr area rock bands but also guests from neighbouring countries – Moldova, Ukraine, and even from Italy. Young groups “Vremia Zhut” (“Time to Live”), “Pokoleniye Budushchego” (“Future Generation”), “Stels-Tera” and the students committee from the Dnestr State University were the organisers of the event. Below is a report from the event:

It is pouring rain outside. I got to the Palace of Culture all soaking wet and had only one thought on my mind: “my soul decided to visit this world in sad times”. But the Palace is busy, a colourful crowd of local rock musicians is so joyful it charges me up with its energy and makes my sadness fade away. Like everybody else, I am checking my watch and can’t wait for the concert to start.

The youth of Dnestr is in love with Max Berlyan, the leader of the group “Vremia Zhut” (“Time to Live”). He is the Master of Ceremony tonight. He got on stage and proudly announced, “We are surrounded by borders. We are suppressed by the economy. Politicians, their ambitions and demands divide us. But we have one great thing in common – music. They want to teach us how to hate each other, make us enemies and maybe even start a new war but as long as rock is alive we will be friends. We do not want to fight. We want to be united. And we will have that peace! We don’t give a damn about borders, language differences and politicians’ wishes. Heavy Metal rules!”

The Master of Ceremony announced the band “Piatuy Ugol” (“Fifth Corner”) from Triaspol. This is our kind of alternative rock, technical and coordinated, which has been making us happy for four years. A solo singer “Licho” sings about who “Is Gone” and only left the “Road” dust behind, and his heart is full of “Sorrow” because of this. You may have already guessed that the names in these quotes are the names of the compositions. It is always difficult to be the first group to start the show, the audience hasn’t tuned in yet, it is stiff and inert. But who knows, maybe the crowd is just saving its energy for the next group?

German lyrics followed the Russian, but they are locals, residents of Bender. “Dreiklang” are new on our musical stage but, nevertheless, they have a good reputation after only a couple of performances. The crowd recognizes them and screams like crazy: “Give us our Dnestr “Lacrimoza”!” They are playing gothic metal, the same style as the Austrian group, you could recognize the sound right away. They explained why they use the German language: “German culture has never been introduced in our Republic before. But we know the German language and decided to use it in our lyrics. At first, it was just a matter of interest to us, then it became a principle, and now it is our lifestyle. By the way,

these musicians are the students of our State University Department of Linguistics so they do know the German language.

Beautiful yet sad music paralyses the audience with deep thoughts, thoughts about love, human feelings, and just simple everyday stuff. The girl next to me sighs, "I can listen to them play all night long."

A Dnestr band "Before Christ" was playing next. It woke the crowd up. They played passionate rock with incredible guitar riffs. People started dancing, jumping, screaming and roaring. Not that long time ago the band celebrated their fifth anniversary and now their songs are well-known and widely loved. Fans do their best to sing along although the lyrics are in English. I am trying to listen and understand the sense – something about a count having left for war, about a beautiful lady, about wizards, horses and a road to hell. There is romantic mood of the past entwined in spiritual feelings.

The band "Doll" from Kishinev takes the stage now, playing a mixture of alternative and hard rock, singing in Moldavian and English. There is a touch of Western rock in their music, a legendary band "Korn" in particular. The music is aggressive. The lyrics are about the modern world, freedom,

personal choice each person has. Before the next band is ready I am heading backstage to make a small interview – "Would 'Korn' be your idols by any chance?"

They are laughing: - right you are! But we don't sing their songs, we don't believe in plagiarism. On the basis of their style, however, we are just making something new which is characteristic of us, only us.

– Have you ever visited Bender before?

– No, this is our first time, they say, and we really like it here! It is such a cozy and quiet town. We made it before the rain started and walked around a bit. And one more thing: everything here is cheaper than Kishinev. We went shopping and bought lots of stuff to bring home.

– Shall I unveil a big mystery regarding our prices?

– I am trying to intrigue the guests. - we are closer to Odessa and there are huge wholesale markets in the area where the goods are coming from to the Dnestr region passing only one border and only one custom clearance, which is Ukrainian. And until the goods reach Kishinev, they also have to

**Their music is so energetic, rough and lively that it is impossible to stand still. Because of the hoarse delivery of the vocals the words cannot be heard but nobody needs them anyway. The audience has finally been driven mad; wild unimaginable dances, jumps, screams, lion's roar are everywhere – people are taking off their T-shirts spinning them over their heads, shaking chains, turning heads.**

pass the border between Moldova and the Dnestr region and have to be cleared by customs, of course. That is why prices are higher at their final destination.

– Hmm...yeah, - the guys are lost in thoughts for a moment. – Isn't possible to get rid of the border? What am I supposed to answer? They don't realize that the border was made after the civil war of 1992 which divided Moldavia into two camps? Most likely there is no return to the unity of that time.

Meanwhile, "Gandul Matei" is playing on stage. The translation from Romanian means: "Cat's Thoughts". It is a heavy but melodious rock which is tightly braided with nationalistic overtones which makes the music even deeper and richer. A handsome black-eyed leader Niku sings in Romanian (Romanian is very similar to Moldavian so the locals understand it easily): "A man is lying on asphalt. He fell down and cannot stand up. People are passing by but do not stop. They do not want to notice him, they do not want to help him. They have their own problems, they do not care about a stranger in trouble. Stand up, man, go, you have to go on. In this life you can rely only on yourself. Nobody would give you a hand. Stand up and go!" You feel there is no way out for this man and can feel the deep pain in this song. Isn't it really like this, that the world is so cruel? – I am asking myself. And I am answering myself right away: if it wasn't like that, would the flowers be red now on the crosses along the roads where Dnestr people were burying their families under flying bullets back then in 1992, the year which seems to be so far away and yet so close at the same time? Would Moldavians hate Russians for speaking different languages? Would brothers from the right

bank of the Dnestr River kill their brothers from the left bank if the world was not so cruel?

Well, my thoughts drifted too far. Today the music gathered us, so different and so alike, in this place. It has united us and forged new friendships, which means there is no need to think so negatively.

Max Berlyan is on stage now playing various contests with the audience. I am running to a make-up room to talk to Romanian rockers.

– Niku, why "Cat's Thoughts"?

– These are thoughts from nowhere, since nobody knows how cats think.

– What are your impressions of the Dnestr region?

– We have never been here before. But we can feel old Moldavia here, a kind of standstill. This stupid customs, so many soldiers, checkpoints, delays at the border, problems getting the instruments in... it is really frustrating!

– You were singing the songs from your album "Cu gandul la Ea"







– “Thinking of Her”. Who is this mysterious She?  
 – She means music, mother, woman, love, pain, joy, friendship, sadness, life, death. There are very many important feminine words. She is everything a man has, so to speak.

A Ukraine band “Garotta” shows up playing death-metal. Their entrance almost makes the audience explode. First, only the guitar player enters the stage. He is dressed in tight black leather shaking his long waist-length hair. He roars out a welcome but it disappears in the storm of ovation. “An authentic rock man!”, screams a boy on the left. The next guitar player is coming on stage. He is in the same black leather clothes, chains, a collar and the same fluffy long hair. He strums a couple of chords on his guitar and people again are screaming and applauding in awe. Following him, the third guitar player comes on stage who is an exact copy of the first two, and then the drummer appears and finally the lead vocalist appears. If it weren’t for their different faces one could take them all for twin brothers. They are brothers anyway, it seemed, members of one big family called heavy rock.

Standing in a row, shaking their manes in unison, they start playing. Their music is so energetic, rough and lively that it is impossible to stand still. Because of the hoarse delivery of the vocals the words cannot be heard but nobody needs them anyway. The audience has finally been driven mad: wild unimaginable dances, jumps, screams, lion’s roar are everywhere – people are taking off their T-shirts spinning them over their heads, shaking chains, turning heads. I am joining this insanity as well forgetting my journalistic reservation. Well, I am also human, and not only a human but a rock fan. Where else can you roar and jump as much as you like but here?

The lead singer takes a seat on the edge of the stage naively and stretches his hands to the audience. At once dozens of hands have caught him, he is pulled into the crowd and they are carrying him over their heads as if he was an icon. People are breathless in their delight, but they do not forget to return the singer back to the stage. “Ukraine! Ukraine!”- comes the cry, mingling now with “Metal!” It occurs to me for the tenth time that the Soviet Union may have broken apart but its ancestral memory is still with the people and no politics that can suppress it. The Ukrainians are not only our neighbour, they are an integral part of our life, people of the same mentality, the same religion, and the same national Slavic family. And it is wonderful that the young people are aware of it!

The Italians from “R.O.T.” are closing the festival. I do not know what this abbreviation stands for but their music is recognisable, classical hard-core. It is both incendiary and vivid, and the audience, inspired by the Ukrainians, continue their dancing

rage. I am already waiting for the guys backstage with my pen and a notebook. While the host says goodbye to the audience and thanks them for warm welcome, I quickly activate my knowledge of foreign languages and start an interview:

– Are you frequent visitors to the Commonwealth of Independent States?  
 – First time. Before Moldova, we never visited any of these countries. We are in shock. We knew that there is poverty here but we did not suppose that it is so severe!... Yesterday we had a concert in Kishinev. Over there it is a bit better, more civilised but here it is just terrible.  
 – And how did you like the welcome of our rock fans?

– We are very delighted with your audience! People are very vigorous, emotional, we did not expect to see it.  
 Now it is my turn to be surprised: You are Italians, come on! Who is talking here about emotions? But apparently concerts in Italy are more composed and strangely enough, without the jumping and wild dances and savage roars we experienced here. Thinking to myself that Italians are spoiled by civilization, I got their autographs for the newspaper with some group photographs, and left this hall with the firm belief that there is no such thing as too much rock music.

I am going home in a lively crowd of rockers. They are full of impressions talking about what they have seen and heard at the concert. They will be remembering today’s musical spectacle for long time to come and will be sorry that we do not have that many wonderful occasions.

The town is covered with night mist, the rain stopped a long time ago. It is quiet outside. I see the stars’ reflections in the puddles. The sky is clear which means that tomorrow will be a bright and



sunny day. It will be a peaceful day. We are splashing through the puddles and singing. We did not forget that the concert was dedicated to the Day of Independence of our small republic which was won by our parents in a war which was so unnecessary, as death and murder of this nature is never justified. The past cannot be forgotten, but today we are thinking of the past. We are young and our whole life is in front of us. We are joyful and happy. We believe that we can change the world so that every man who falls down should be given a hand. And language barriers and borders would not be such unconquerable barriers for us. I say to myself: “Well, nevertheless, my soul visited the world in wonderful times!”





Michał Moniuszko, Polish photographer. Graduate of Polish Philology (specializing in Culture Management) at Warsaw University. Participated in scholarship to Odin Teatret in Holstebro, Denmark and THEpUBLIC, Community Arts Organization in West Bromwich, UK. Since 2001 works at the Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations Centre in Sejny, Poland participating in projects and coordinating The Borderland Film and Photo Workshop Programme. Has also had individual exhibitions: Losy Podśluchane and Tam, gdzie słońce zapada.

## The Galadus – the Border Lake

The Galadus is a lake divided in half by the Polish-Lithuanian border. I live in a nearby town of Sejny, and the place has always appeared magical to me. I have seen it as a path to another world, but also as a tightly-shut gate, probably since the time when my friends from primary school crossed the lake with the intention of reaching their dream land – America, which for them meant Matchbox model cars and the first home video movies.

Most inhabitants on the Polish side are Lithuanians, and you can often hear polyphonic songs here, something that is very rare in Polish traditional singing. Today, walking along the shores of the Galadus, I hear from elderly people that “there’s no problem walking to the other side.” During the last 100 years, these people have been the citizens of several nations, and that probably explains their lack of reaction when I ask them how they will feel when the borders finally disappear.



Grandmother with grandson, Krasnogruda village



Eugenia and Józef, Krasnogruda village



Evening, Radziucie village





Old photos, Ogrodniki village



Józef, Dusznica village





Arkady Nesterenko, journalist born in Russia, lives in Belarus. In 2002 graduated from Krichev Agro-Technical College (specialising in networking and databases). Since 2003 an editorial assistant in a non-state newspaper in Krichev *Volny gorad*. Member of the public organization *Ecohome* and the Belorussian Association of Journalists.

# Released... Feel free as a bird

Forced emigration in present-day Belarus

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September the Ministry of Information, as such, blocked the publishing of a daily newspaper *Byeloruskaya Delovaya Gazeta* (*Belarussian Business Newspaper*). Prepared by the editorial staff of *BDG*, the Friday issue was not sent to the press. The newspaper has been printed outside Belarus for a long time now, in Smolensk, Russia. There, however, its publishing has become impossible due to the absence of the next required registration certificate. Why, strictly speaking, should a Belarussian newspaper be published in Smolensk?

**Emigration, “community home”, “slammer”, bullet**

It has already been ten years that all major institutions of civil society have been under repression and steadily eliminated on purpose. It can be observed most vividly during election campaigns. If you object to a Belarussian model of happiness, emigrate! Leave and go to the west, Europe, or to the east, Russia! And nobody, actually, cares that you, maybe, would like to live in your own country. The logic is very simple: if you do not like something, get out. Oh, won't you leave amicably? So, we send you to a community home for a year or two, contemplate upon the essence of the historical moment. Oh, wasn't it enough? Haven't you understood? Do time in the slammer! Contemplate for a bit longer. There is also an extreme method: a bullet in your head. This option is reserved for those who will not emigrate, no matter what. There is no use putting them in jail; court hearings would only attract public attention, which, in turn, would add to his/her popularity. Zakharenko, Gonchar, Krasovskiy, Zavadskiy – these are momentous names entered in blood in Belarussian history. They “simply”

Zakharenko, Gonchar, Krasovskiy, Zavadskiy – these are momentous names entered in blood in Belarussian history. They “simply” disappeared. There are no such people anymore.

disappeared. There are no such people anymore. Gennadiy Karpenko also had assistance which helped him ‘to leave’ life. Recently, it was heard that Vasil Bukov, a master of word, a nation's apostle, as he was called, was “effectively cured” by Belarussian special forces as soon as he came back from long-term emigration in summer 2003.

I am telling you all this to make you understand the way the Belarussian system is structured. From outside, there is an illusion of stability, a myth of prosperity and well-being. In reality, however, there is an atmosphere of total fear and tiredness...

**Forced emigration**

Nonetheless, when confronted with a democratic community, even if it is not numerous, only 50 - 100 people, the above-described system breaks down. It stops

working. Yes, we have not yet reached the point when all 100 people would be put in prison simultaneously. Who knows, the future is coming. For the time being, under the cover of conducting some sort of inspection, additional registration of your license, one more registration, God knows what else, it is much easier to create conditions in which it is simply impossible to work legally in the country. It does not matter if it is a University, an editorial office of an independent newspaper, or a high school. The most important point is that you do not fit into the overall system. Please, leave... underground. As a matter of fact, that's how it looks. Paradoxically, for the time being, professionals who, indeed, are building a new Belarus, are put in such working conditions in which they are striving to survive. If they do not liquidate you legally according to the law, as it was, for example, in the case of a right-protection organization Vesna (Spring) and hundreds of others (pouring out propaganda mud on them beforehand), they will constrain you in the frame of economical survival.

*Byeloruskaya Delovaya Gazeta (Belarussian Business Newspaper)* is one of the best public political papers of present-day Belarus. On 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003 the Minister of Information, Mr Podgayny, issued warnings to *Byeloruskaya Delovaya Gazeta (Belarussian Business Newspaper)* and *BDG*. For official use, which required the suspension of publishing. And on 29<sup>th</sup> May he signed a resolution. The newspaper stopped editions for the next three months. Starting from September 2003, *BDG* renewed publishing, but none of the printing houses in Belarus actually agreed to print it. On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003 during the “Day of Closed Newspapers” (a funny name, isn't it?) organized by the Belarussian Association of Journalists I approached Svetlana Kalinkina, the editor-in-chief of *BDG*, to say hello. Of course, first of all, I congratulated her on the renewal of publishing and asked her: “Why Smolensk?” “There are no official grounds”, – she answered, – “The only thing workers of printing

houses can say when meeting me in person is that I must understand it all myself.” You see. We all do understand it. There is one curious fact, here you go: in September, right after the renewal of publishing, one of the journalists of *BDG* called the President's Administration. A clerk, who the journalist addressed a question to, was surprised: “Haven't you been closed yet?” Starting from autumn 2003, the newspaper was forced to be published in Smolensk. By the way, it is not the first emigration of the editorial staff. *BDG* experienced a similar situation in 1996-1997. It was published abroad, in Vilnius, and was distributed only via its own network of distributors. What is more, in December of the same year a state system of press distribution terminated relations with *Belarussian Business Newspaper*. The refusal to distribute newspapers was against the provisions adopted in the concluded agreements. At present, the newspaper is available only through a network of private distributors and only in the capital city of Minsk.

Naturally, the above-mentioned facts affected the circulation and regularity of issues of the newspaper. One of the best Belarussian dailies now is issued twice a week and, let me repeat myself, is distributed only in Minsk, yet, even in the capital sometimes it is not easy to get a fresh issue of *BDG*. In his interview for *Nasha Niva (Our Field)*, a permanent publisher, and currently the editor-in-chief of *BDG*, Petr Martsev presented a view that by the end of 2005 all independent newspapers will have been closed in Belarus.

As such, the year 2003 for many became an important one in the context of forced emigration. The *BDG* story is the most remarkable example in the media world where the independent press is forced into a certain reservoir. Today, outside

Belarus, even in Smolensk, a whole range of issues is published. *BDG*, *Salidarnasts (Solidarity)*, *Tovarishc (Comrade)*, *Vremia (Time)*, *Volnu Gorad (Free City)*, *Dien (Day)*. By the way, *Dien* is a separate story.

### Enough!

“It was an elegant victory!” - Aleksandr Lukashenka stated after the elections on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2001. But a couple of days earlier, during a meeting with his electorate in the Palace of the Republic on 4<sup>th</sup> September, he announced: “...it might be the case that we weakened control over the mass media and we allowed them to make this lawless mess which is taking place right now. But we have to suffer it through. If we lock somebody now... But they are asking for it. We are not supposed to do so. We will make charges after the elections.” And they, indeed, made charges afterwards...

The closing of *Pagonya* became the most noticeable and saddest event. It was only half a year short of celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> jubilee. I will not get into the absurdity of “the case” itself, let me only draw your attention to the following: from 1999 to 2000 *Pagonya* received five warnings and it was obvious that the local authorities had simply had enough of the newspaper. Long before the legal liquidation of the periodical, the first criminal lawsuit against journalists in Belarus was filed. The journalists were accused of defamation of the President for the articles of Pavel Mozheyko “We are going to elections,” a letter from a reader Sergey Krakasevich “Him – not Lukashenka” and a poem of an unidentified author “Promised! Promise! Will promise!” It was already a success and the purpose of arranging the case found its logical finale. The editor-in-chief Nikolay Markevich and a journalist Pavel Mozheyko were found guilty and were

sentenced to a term in a community home. The newspaper was not issued anymore...

Since 2003 the staff of the closed *Pagonya* have been issuing a newspaper under a new title *Dien (Day)*. But... it seems like this newspaper is no. 1 on someone's black list. In September last year the Regional Prosecutor's Office in

In his interview for *Nasha Niva (Our Field)*, a permanent publisher, and currently the editor-in-chief of *BDG*, Petr Martsev presented a view that by the end of 2005 all independent newspapers will have been closed in Belarus.

Grodno robbed the editorial office of *Dien* confiscating editorial equipment, paper and cash. Two September issues were seized in the printing house. Should it come as a surprise then that after quite a long break *Dien* began to be published abroad? But... on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 30 km away from the Russian-Belarussian border, an old Mercedes car which was carrying the newspapers from Smolensk was stopped. The whole edition was confiscated and, without any explanation, has not been returned yet. To be honest, I planned to finish my story about *Dien* with the above fact. But... on 19<sup>th</sup> August the Director of *Dienpress JSC* Nikolay Markevich found out about the legal liquidation of the publishing unit.

“This is a political order, the same one as the closing of the *Pagonya* newspaper”, - Nikolay Markevich is positive. What else can be added to it? They cleaned it up elegantly...

#### Lights off

The story about defamation of “the father” fades away compared with an article which resulted in a criminal lawsuit against a journalist of the newspaper *Volnu Gorad* (*Free City*). In the same year, 2001, an editor Sergey Nerovnuy, a journalist Nikolay Matorenko and a photo-journalist Vadim Stefanenko were accused of seizing a hostage, a militia officer. How do you like it? Nikolay Matorenko remembered when he mentioned his article in a so-called basement, that he at once became “respected”. Thanks to God, the case did not lead to a court sentence but, as a matter of fact, the newspaper was not issued for half a year, editorial equipment was confiscated, and the editorial staff was forced to move office four times as nobody wanted to deal with “terrorists.”

#### First underground form

The year 2003 was a memorable one not only for the mass media. It was in 2003 when Belarussian authorities closed, but it would be more correctly to state, banished to the streets, the National Humanistic School named after Jakub Kolas. One of the best educational institutions which, one could honestly state, prepared future Belarussian elite, was characterized by one peculiar feature. All subjects were taught in the Belarussian language. “What? Should we study modern physics, mathematics and economics in Belarussian? It is difficult to formulate definitions in natural science in the Belarussian language...” I believe it is quite easy to guess the author of the above quote. Currently, students are studying in private apartments all over Minsk. Each of them has his/her own file in the KGB as well as their parents, teachers...

American, Lithuanian, Polish and Czech ambassadors can be met at school graduation parties but do not even try to

Currently, students are studying in private apartments all over Minsk. Each of them has his/her own file in the KGB as well as their parents, teachers...

look for a delegation of the Belarussian authorities there.

Presently, there are around 100 school students. They have even recruited students for the next underground academic year.

At the end of August, students came back from Poland where they were invited for the summer semester by the Club of Catholic Intelligence and Warsaw government...

In excellent conditions, using the knowledge of the two best high schools in Poland, every day Belarussian kids studied many disciplines that the programme consisted of, as well as using a swimming pool and going on excursions to Gdansk and Krakow.

Besides major subjects, twelve students covered intensive one-month courses in TV-journalism under the supervision of a famous Polish TV-journalist, documentary journalist, Mirosław Dembiński. They met Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Zanussi and Lech Wałęsa. Now the students are on holiday and in October they start school again. And again, it will be in private apartments...

#### A ticket to life

Within a year Belarussian authorities gave the European Humanistic University a “ticket to life” as well. Come on, is it a serious loss? One University more, one less. Generally speaking, it is not a problem to get a higher education in Belarus. And if it is indeed like this so what is the problem? I could tell you that EHU was one of several higher education institutions where Belarussians could receive a truly high quality education. This is a fact. But let me draw your attention to a different issue. You can become a student in Belarus but there is a problem because if you would like to graduate from a higher education institution you are supposed to refrain from an active civil standpoint, otherwise you will be “assisted” in collecting your documents yourself and leave the university. Let me give you only two examples (as there are dozens or possibly hundreds of such cases). In 2004, my friend Pasha Krasovskiy got expelled from the II academic year of the Pedagogical University, named after M. Tank, just because of the fact that he was in the October Square in Minsk after the events of 17<sup>th</sup> October. Dima Chertkov, to be honest, tried to pass entrance examinations to get to the Academy of Arts 4 or even 5 times. In 2004 he did enter the University and in autumn went to Kiev to Maydan. He came back and in a month he was forced to collect his documents from the Academy. I am telling you all that as, in my opinion, presently, EHU is the only school in which you cannot be ashamed and hide your points of view, your civil standpoint.

In August, EHU announced the recruitment of students for an educational programme to be conducted in Vilnius... In Lithuania the National Institute of Social Economical and

Political Research (NISEPI) is also registered but its branch in Belarus is closed. Here in Lithuania everything is straightforward. According to the questionnaire conducted by NISEPI, which was coherent with the data from the Gallup Institute, Aleksandr Lukashenka did not receive the required number of votes to change the constitution following his own naming as a candidate for President for the third term. Who needs “incorrect” institutes?

#### Instead of epilogue

Possibly, one could tell that I chose only negative examples, but there should be positive ones as well. Exactly, there should be such examples but I do not see them. It is a pity that this system is doing its best to digest and spit out abroad as a used chewing gum its own people who are forward, who do not want their country to stay on the outskirts of Europe. Let me finish with the words of a well-known Belarussian journalist Pavel Mozheyko, the words which stick in my head: “There are two life philosophies. The first one is the philosophy of rats, i.e. those who would leave upon noticing the first symptoms of crisis. And there is the philosophy of captains, those, who would stay on their ship till the very end, no matter what”...

on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 30 km away from the Russian-Belarussian border, an old Mercedes car which was carrying the newspapers from Smolensk was stopped. The whole edition was confiscated and, without any explanation, has not been returned yet





Małgorzata Olszewska, finished Polish philology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 2002 and is now doing a PhD in literature at the same university. Worked for the Polish newspaper *Dziennik Polski*. Now publishes in *Życie Warszawy*. Participated in the Visegrad Summer School at Villa Decius in Krakow. Graduate of Study for Film Knowledge at the Film Club Śródmiejski in Krakow. Practices Aikido and plans to become the first female Editor-in-Chief of a Polish daily newspaper.

# Wot Polska – This is Poland

The people from Kabaty and Żoliborz look at them with a crooked eye. They've been here for just a moment and they have everything that any Pole must work hard for many years to get – a flat, a job (although illegal) and also benefits. "Damn repatriates!"

They left their whole lives behind the Eastern border. They also brought their intolerable accent. It brings back memories of the obligatory Russian classes in the schools.

The people from Kabaty and Żoliborz look at them with a crooked eye. They've been here for just a moment and they have everything that any Pole must work hard for many years to get – a flat, a job (although illegal) and also benefits. "Damn repatriates!"

Anna and Anastasia came from Kazakhstan. Anna is a stout and joyful woman. She works in a factory as a worker. She doesn't want to say what she used to do in her old country, but I suspect that her position was higher than here. Anastasia is very young. She has some kind of an unnatural kindness about her, that creates a distance and makes it impossible for me to call her by her first name.

They invite me to sit at a table, serve cookies and tea, albeit inexpensive and in teabags, but served in a fine china. First they talk about the men who came with them. Anna's husband – an aviation technician by profession – works as a guard in Poland. He's sleeping now after a night shift. Anna is very proud of her son, Jerzy, who is very well educated. He obtained two degrees from SGH (Warsaw School of Economics) and lives in Denmark now. Jerzy is very lucky. What about the rest of the family? Poland promised to help them, but gave them only relief funds. Four people received 4000 zlotys in total. Anna's husband, a Russian national, has no right to obtain a Polish retirement pension. In order to qualify for it, he would need to work for 10 more years, until he is

We, from the East, have complexes. We are afraid to say what we think. For seventy years they've been telling us that it was dangerous, and now we are even afraid to ask. We are afraid to express ourselves.

69 years-of-age. There's the flat, that's true, but there are no good jobs. And a man without a job is worth nothing.

I look at them, surprised. These people received, to begin with, more than myself and my friends are able to get during ten years of working. What do their words mean? And their absurd expectations? Acquired helplessness. I'm looking at Anastasia with a question in my mind.

The Poles are very open people – she says quietly. We, from the East, have complexes. We are afraid to say what we think. For seventy years they've been telling us that it was dangerous, and now we are even afraid to ask. We are afraid to express ourselves.

I see, that fear, that nourished them together with the mother's milk, doesn't let them take care of themselves.

- Anastasia, do you know Polish well?  
- No, I haven't got a job. I'm a volunteer in an orphanage, so I'm with little kids all the time. I haven't got any friends and I have nowhere to practice my speaking.

So this isn't only fear because how can you come to terms with reality if you don't possess the main tool that translates it for you...

It's different with Yana. She ends the phone call with an energetic "bye, bye". She's a tall, blonde woman with classical European features, well dressed, energetic. She lacks Anastazja's courtesy. She serves her tea in very nice cups, but the apple pie is a bit mouldy.

Yana is a Kirghiz citizen, a Polish national, and came straight from the U.S.A. Her diplomas from the University of Michigan (Master of Art in Applied Economics, Master of Science of Accounting), obtained with honors, are hanging on the wall. Her decision to come to Poland seems very rational to Yana.

- I think this is a good place for me. I studied Economy in Russia and in the U.S.A. I know both the Eastern and the Western markets, but it's difficult to find a job because I haven't got Polish citizenship, and I'm not going to obtain my citizenship until I find a job.

In order to obtain Polish citizenship she has to pass her exam before a Consul in Kaliningrad (there is no Polish Consulate in Kyrgyzstan). Next to the bed, there's the *Illustrated History of Poland*. Now she needs to learn Polish geography and language. At the moment Yana doesn't speak very well. She has gaps in her vocabulary, and we often switch into English.

- I attend the courses run by the Polish Humanitarian Action and I have a great teacher, Magda. I study at home. I have a grammar book here – she laughs. And she says she has no problems because of the language. She's even surprised that I ask. The Poles are such nice people, nobody has ever been unkind to her. She really values the Polish people, she just doesn't like the fact that they like to complain a lot. Yana looks American and speaks with an American accent.

Maybe this is why she is so popular. Nobody would even dare to mention to somebody from the West that he or she didn't speak Polish well enough.

Mrs Viera and Mr Henryk Ditchen are young, just like Yana and Anastasia (only the young can escape from the stable life and go for their dreams). And most often the young people believe that love, friendship and kindness exist in the world. Mr and Mrs Ditchen are the quintessential Romeo and Juliet, although they are close to fifty.

They came to Poland four years ago. It is hard to imagine a longer journey – they lived in Vladivostok. Mrs Viera originally comes from Sakhalin. There was not much common sense in their decision to come to Poland. Henryk's father, expatriated before the War, and dreamed that his children would one day settle in Poland. That's all.

But starting your life all over again at this age is risky. Now Henryk complains about his bosses who ignore his experience (he used to be a manager of an export company, and the Dean of the Higher Academy of Fishing). He complains that even sending a simple message like, "We haven't got anything for you," is too difficult for his bosses. He organizes PTTK (Polish Tourist Country-Lover's Society) tours to keep himself occupied. He gets to know Poland, goes to church, gets used to "barszcz" – a traditional beetroot soup with dumplings and "flaki" – another traditional soup made from animal intestines.

Viera never spoke Polish. At the moment she is trying to learn one new, useful word a day, and reads marine books given to her by her husband.

She is unconditionally happy. They acknowledged her embroidery talent (she received a diploma). She is registered in the Unemployment Office, but she volunteers to help mentally handicapped children in a social help home in Bielany, and she advises other repatriate women how not to give in to depression.

When I ask her how her Polish language learning is going, she laughs.

- Oh, some time ago I was taking care of a sick girl. She looked at me and asked: "Why didn't your mother teach you to speak?" The nurse who was standing next to her, was ashamed of her behavior, but I know I don't speak very well.

- What is most difficult for you?

- Let me think... you, Polish people don't say what you mean, and you're not to the point. You change the meaning of words. During the first year, I thought I was stupid...

- But to you the words have a different meaning, they are unclear – adds Henryk.

- I don't understand, what words do you mean?

- Well, sometimes you say that something is "zajebiste" (fucking) and it sounds terrible to us. On the other hand, for you "kurwa" (whore) is a swear-word, while in Russia...

- No, Henryk, this isn't a good example. It is difficult for us because Poles don't seem to understand as well as the Russians the meaning of truth, friendship, love...

Damn repatriates. They received everything. They have their beloved dream land. A few more years and they will perfect their Polish, forget about old meanings, about the accent, and they will be no different from us.

- Well, sometimes you say that something is "zajebiste" (fucking) and it sounds terrible to us. On the other hand, for you "kurwa" (whore) is a swear-word, while in Russia...

- No, Henryk, this isn't a good example. It is difficult for us because Poles don't seem to understand as well as the Russians the meaning of truth, friendship, love...



Janis Pipars, World Picture Network freelance photojournalist based in Riga, Latvia. Graduate of Latvian Academy of Culture. Since 2003 has published in Latvia's biggest newspaper *Diena*, *NZZ Folio Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Der Spiegel* and *Time Magazine*. In 2001 had an exhibition of work in the World Press Photo's Baltic seminar in Vilnius.

# THE BORDER DIVIDES AND UNITES

Everyone wants to be loved. Nastja, an Estonian girl, is waiting for great love and thinks that she will find it in Russia. Narva is almost Russian because of its rich history, the Estonian-Russian border, which is close to the center of the city, as well as the many Russian speakers here. All street names are in two languages, in official buildings and on the streets people speak only Russian. And the Russian mentality still influences the minds of the young generation. They will never be pure Estonians again.



Early morning in the city center. Almost nothing in the city suggests it is a poor place which is located on the eastern border of the European Union. Narva is changing together with the people.





The sports school in Narva. A young artistic gymnast is performing in the gymnasium. To get good results the trainer still uses Soviet-style training methods.



A Friday night party. After a long working week, young people get together to talk and drink.



Maksim (23), Narva city hospital laboratory worker. Every woman in the hospital enjoys his presence at work.



Nastja (21), sales girl. She was born in Estonia but feels Russian. After one year she will get a long-term Russian visa to be able to leave Estonia forever.





Aleksandra Poblinkova, student of the first semester of journalism at Irkutsk State University. Got the award for best young journalist of 2004 in the *Wostochno-Sibirskaya Prawda* newspaper. Studied in Germany for three months. Has a diploma of very good knowledge of German. In 2005 started to work in the news agency *Teleinform*, *Cosmopolitan Siberia*, *Shibkii Umnik* and *Komsomolskaya Prawda* newspaper (part of Irkutsk State University). General editor of a newspaper for scouts. Likes her job, to meet friends and the nature of Baikal Lake.

## The extraordinary adventures of some Germans in Russia

How we were building international friendship

the most difficult. German language was only enough for the most basic level. Basically, to have a normal conversation was very difficult.

So, here is the first day in the company of my sister:

-Do you have bears walking in the streets in Siberia?

-No, bears live in the woods and zoo.

-Do you have the Internet over there?

-Yes we do. And cell phones as well.

-Do you have snow on the ground in summer?

-No, summers are hot and the temperature is about +26C.

After this conversation they lost interest in me for a while, and returned to discussing their own problems. Because I couldn't understand a single slang word, I had nothing to do but sit there and smile. But after

It has been many years since Mr. Gebel's programme came into existence in Russia. Our pupils go to Germany and live with German families and attend local schools there for a period of ten weeks. In addition, they break stereotypes that the Europeans have concerning Russia and, thus, promote the improvement of international relations. Sometimes a trip ends in a quarrel with a "host family", but usually the ten weeks in Germany is the start of a real and firm friendship.

I was lucky to participate in this programme in 2004. I lived with the family of a German school teacher, Suzanne, in a small village called Reinsberg. In addition to my "host mother", I had a "host sister", Karolin, a cheerful punk one year younger than myself. Besides studying and sightseeing, most of my spare time was spent communicating with my peers. The first two weeks were the most difficult weeks of my life. My rather poor knowledge of the German language was only enough to communicate on the most basic level and tell my hosts about Russia. Basically, to have a normal conversation was very difficult.

So, here is my first day in the company of my host sister:

-Do you have bears walking in the streets in Siberia?

-No, bears live in the taiga forest and in zoos.

-Do you have the Internet over there?

-Yes we do. And cell phones as well.

-Do you have snow on the ground and is it cold in summer?

-No, summers are hot and the temperature is about +26C.

- Ah..., I see.

After this traditional conversation they lost interest in me for a while. They returned to discussing their own problems. Since I couldn't understand a single word of their slang, I could do nothing but sit there and smile.

But after two weeks I was able to keep up with any conversation, make appropriate jokes, and even throw in a smart word here and there.

How much I had discovered in just ten weeks! Furthermore the range of topics changed dramatically depending on the company. With my host mum and her friends I was talking about the economy, education and global politics, and with Karolin's friends - about prisons, music and movies.

By the end of the programme I had tons of friends and acquaintances in Germany. I still stay in touch with many of them and we are planning to meet again one day.

The conditions of Mr. Gebel's programme did not include visits of Germans to Russia, but I did invite Karolin and Suzanne to Irkutsk for the next summer holidays. For three weeks we were eating traditional Russian food, travelling around Baikal and building international friendship. All this time I kept a diary. I think my notes will give you a pretty good idea about those days.

### July 16 (The day before their arrival)

My family is stressing out! We have never cleaned our flat so well even before the New Year and our country house has changed beyond recognition. I try to explain that my friends will not mind the mess at home, but nobody will listen to me.

Mum spent half a day cooking as if we were expecting a regiment of gourmet soldiers. Everything is shiny and sparkling. Perhaps it is only the cat that has not been washed...

This entire massive hullabaloo has affected my mood as well... We have not seen each other for a whole year and have just communicated through the Internet... I am getting nervous: what are we going to talk about? How much have they changed during the year? I hope that they won't get a too depressing impression of my favourite city? What should I wear to the airport? There is nothing worse than waiting...that is for sure.

### July 17 (Day of their arrival)

Herzlich Willkommen! Usually I can speak German without any problem, but because of my nervousness the words were

stuck behind my teeth... All that I could do was smile. The airport was a scene of enormous chaos. I had to coordinate the collection of luggage and loading of cars speaking to my stepfather in German and to my guests in Russian... No! The other way round!

After Karolin and Suzanne had gone to bed I could finally catch my breath. We hadn't seen each other for a whole year but it felt like just one day...

As we were walking around the city centre, I introduced my "guest cousins" to the jazz musicians in Irkutsk. Unfortunately, I couldn't participate much in the conversation as I was busy interpreting.

That evening Suzanne went to bed pretty early and Karolin and I were chatting till 5 in the morning. We were showing each other pictures of our friends, exchanging the latest news, recalling last year... We didn't feel like closing our eyes even for a second - we had so much to discuss! It is so great that we have three more weeks ahead of us!!!

#### **July 19 (Introduction to my the parents)**

To avoid getting in the way, my parents have temporarily moved out to our country house. Here it comes - day X! Finally, today, they will discover what people I spent my ten wonderful weeks with. I wonder how they are going to communicate? All the members of my family studied foreign languages at school. Will they be able to remember at least one word?

"Mum, this is Karo, this is Suzanne".

Without any particular difficulties my mum gave a long welcoming speech in English. My stepfather takes to foreign languages easily. Without any hesitation he was mixing Russian, German and English words in one sentence.

Casual conversations were going great but I worried the most about our ceremonial dinner... After spending about an hour at the table with the adults, Karolin and I left for a chat. From time to time I was asked to come inside and help out with a word or two but, in general, my parents were handling the conversation pretty well without my assistance.

Suzanne, my mother and my stepfather were sitting next to the camp fire and were actively discussing religions of the world and the believer's views on life. A passionate Lutheran and two people who from their early childhood have been inculcated with atheism all came to the common conclusion that every religion in its own way is interesting and good, and their roots are the same. This evening definitely set the mood for the next three weeks, which were very joyful as well as interesting.

#### **July 21 (In between our trips)**

Trips... Trips... Baikal, Arshan... Not a single day at home!

Our family actively studies foreign languages. I'm trying to get better, my parents are trying to refresh their memory. Suzanne and Karolin know a few Russian words and can actually pronounce them without an accent.

Generally, you can spot foreigners on the streets in Irkutsk right away. Maybe it's the way they carry themselves, maybe it is the astonished look on their faces, maybe, it is their high quality sportswear. Don't know why, but they stand out in the crowd. But if I met my "guest family" on the street and they were to say "hello" to me, I would never guess that they were from another country.

My two-year-old brother Anthony is the happiest to have the guests in our house. He keeps saying "Guten Morgen" and "Guten Tag" every five minutes and receives many compliments for that. He loves it when kind pretty women smile at him. And it really doesn't matter what language they speak.

#### **July 29 (My friends)**

Karolin really wanted to meet my friends. Every day when we are in town we meet somebody. And everybody feels obliged to inform her that he or she speaks English "a little bit". Now my guests know: This means that speaking English to such a person is useless.

But some of my friends actually have been able to pleasantly surprise me. They have shown sides of their personalities that I would never have guessed existed. Apparently, they know a lot about Irkutsk and Baikal and can easily hold conversations comparing for example, the educational systems in Russia and Germany.

I noticed one strange tendency: Russians know and read many more German authors than Germans do Russian ones. Not all my German friends could say with certainty what Pushkin and Tolstoy are famous for but almost every Russian knows that Goethe wrote "Faust" and Karl Marx wrote "Das Capital".

#### **August 4 (3 days before departure)**

Three weeks have almost flown by. Soon, the airplane will take my friends from the Siberian heat to the German rain. Today we had a family dinner at a restaurant. My stepfather was giving long and pathetic toasts "to the friendship of Nations" and Suzanne was right with him.

"I think these three weeks here in Irkutsk have created a new and strong friendship which will last for many years!"

I can't even imagine what will happen in three days after the guests leave. Now, every evening Karo and I find it very difficult to separate to our bedrooms. For three weeks we have been talking constantly and want to talk our fill for the whole year!

#### **August 7 (Departure day)**

Since last night everything is upside down in our flat. Suits are being packed, farewell gifts are being exchanged. Phone numbers and addresses are being written down. The last day is the most difficult one.

Karolin and I spent our last night together: "Karolin, think of all we haven't done yet!" "Yes, but it is a great reason for me to come back.

You know, I already know what I will show you the next time you come to visit us. It will be totally different from the sights I showed you the last time you were there!"

It is time to go to the airport. Suzanne said that she had learned a new Russian tradition: we have to sit down before leaving the flat "for a good trip"...

Registration was going full speed. We looked like a flock of penguins standing in a circle, hugging-stronger and stronger so we could keep each other's warmth for a long time. "Sasha, thank you and your family for three wonderful weeks in Siberia. Next year we have to meet in Germany!"

Suzanne was trying to imagine how far it is: 7000 kilometres. We are half Eurasia apart, but we know for sure that distance is not an obstacle to friendship.

"Good bye, dear Suzanne and Karolin, have a good flight!"

#### **August 15**

I'm at home looking through the pictures for the hundredth time. My flat seems unusually quiet and empty... Already we have sent each other several letters and we miss each other very much.

After my guests left, I wanted to speak to people in German.... "Weißt du was?..." It was three days later that I realized that there was nobody to speak to.

I love to recall my ten weeks in Germany but I love to recall the three weeks in Siberia even more. So many stereotypes had been broken! For example, my Russian friends were convinced that the typical German is a fat huntsman with a big jug of beer in his hand. They were so surprised to see two young and beautiful "frau". In addition it seems to me that despite all my stories about civilized Siberia, Suzanne and Karo still thought they could meet a bear around the corner.

But now we know that people are the same everywhere and there are no boundaries to normal human relationships. Nicht wahr?





Olga Posashkova, photographer from Lithuania. Graduate of the Photographic Technical College (Bachelor Degree in Design, 2004). Since 2002 works in The Lithuanian Parliament. Earlier worked on the business newspaper *Verslo Zinios*, political magazine *Veidas* and in the photo agency *Inna*. Participated in a photographic project *Young people at risk* initiated by *World Press Photo*. Likes Tarantino films, art exhibitions and chocolate.

# In Lithuania there is such a place...

In Lithuania there is a place where all the borders start to disappear once you get there. You don't feel them there. You can embrace all the world. There you understand that the world is small. This is a place where you understand that borders are like strings which tie the world. This place is Vilnius University which I would like to depict in my photos with as few people as possible or without any people at all. This university is beautiful, old and grand. And the people (the students) leave their mark there, i.e. in forgotten items such as books or pens. The photos might be of empty classrooms, corridors and the rector's office, but among these thick, old walls all borders disappear.



Haec domus Uraniae est



This is Urania's house



Curae  
procul  
este  
profanae

Olga Posashkova

86



Go away the treacherous troubles

Temnitur hic humilis tellus



Olga Posashkova

87



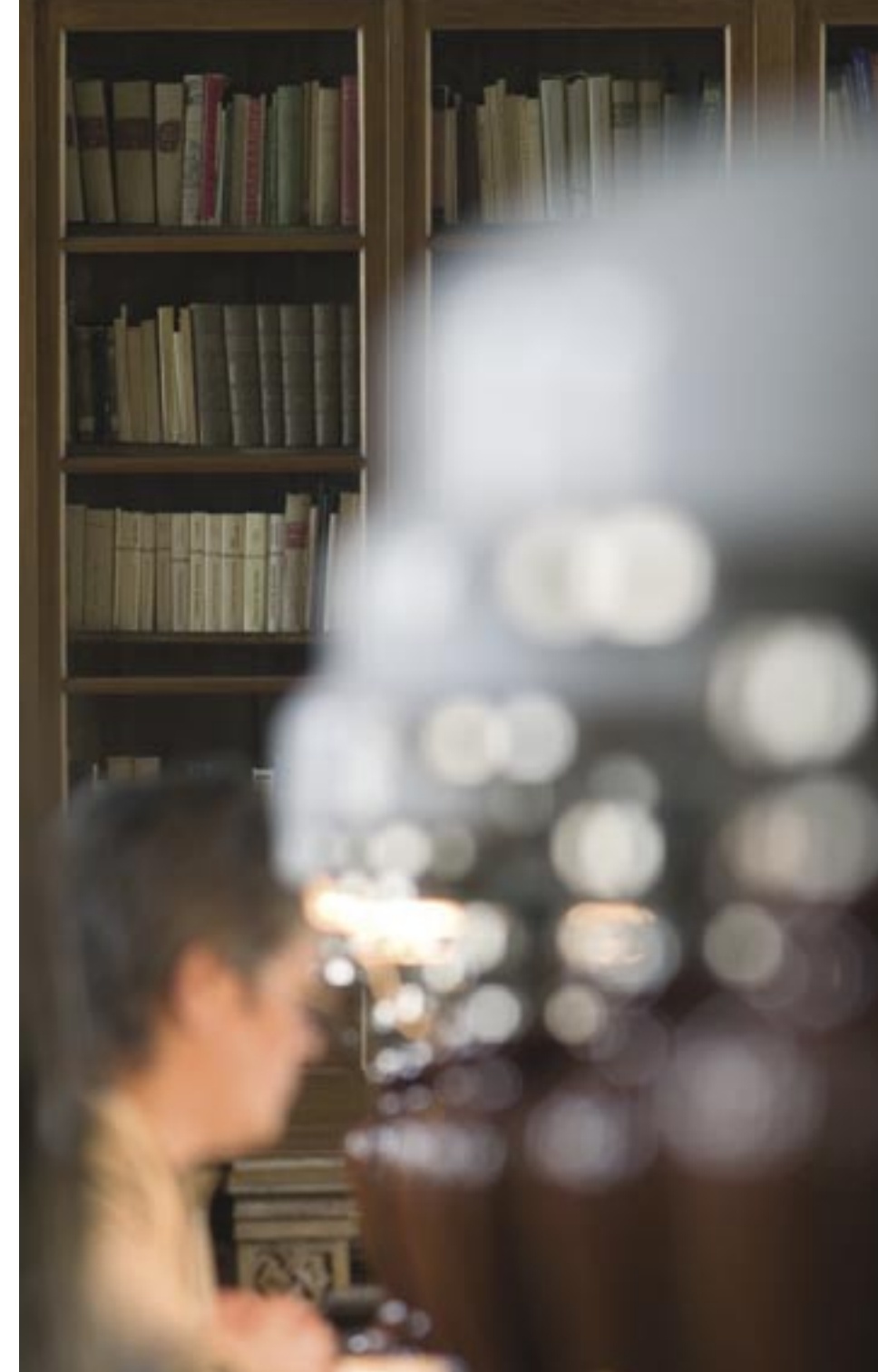


That's the place where the poor land is looked down upon

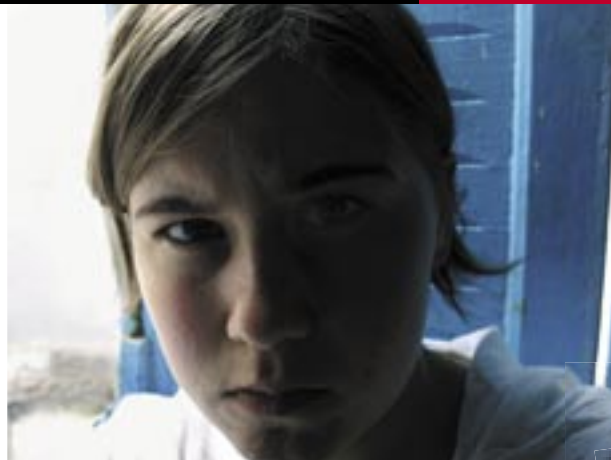


That's the place from which we reach the stars!

Hinc itur ad astra!



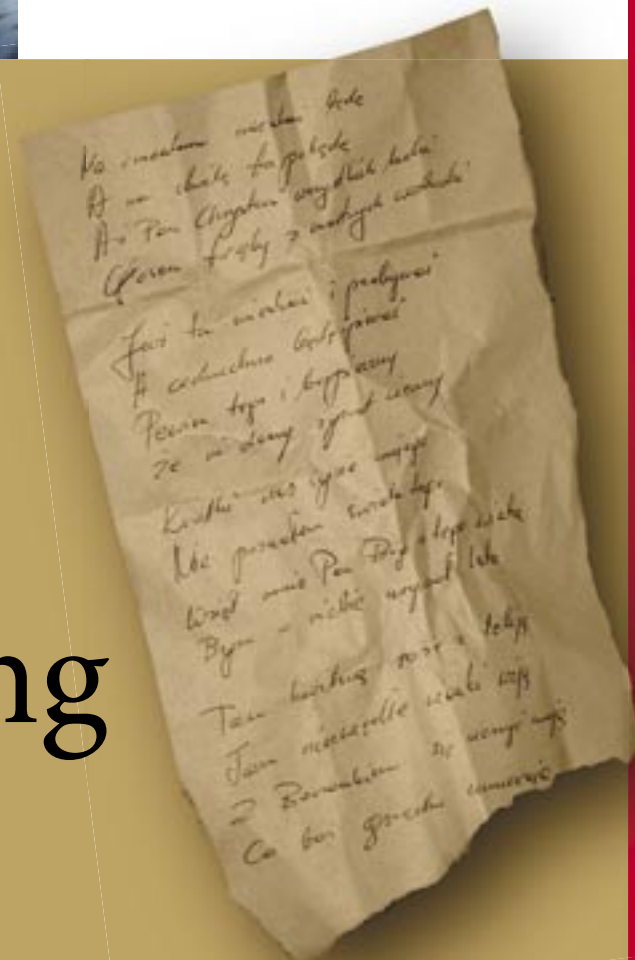




Alicja Puchała, graduate of the Faculty of Psychology at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow. Co-established a Section of the Scientific Association of Psychology Students on *Intercultural Dialogue* and a photographic group *f/5.6*. Co-operated with a Warsaw informational-social magazine *Echo Wydarzeń*. Author of reportage on the Orange Revolution published by *Znak* and pictures - by *Gazeta Poznańska* and *Biuletyn Fotograficzny*.

cooperation: Andriy Veremiyenko

# Rescuers of a vanishing memory



Alicja Puchała

We met them at the beginning of our journey across the borderland, after having visited an Orthodox convent in Jabłeczna and set out along the border down South. These were their last two days in Wola Uhruska, where they came to learn the disappearing traditional Polish and Ukrainian songs from Polesie and to save the Orthodox cemeteries from being overgrown and forgotten. The memory of the previous inhabitants of the borderland disappears together with the songs and ruined graves, of their unfavourable history and the richness of their culture – customs, art, music and dialect.

## “Songs of the Marsh”

This is the title of a project in which more than twenty people from Poland and Ukraine participated. It is part of a wider program, namely, The Cemeteries of the Borderland – a heritage for the future, which aims to “protect the cultural values and landscapes of the decaying necropolis of the Eastern Lubelszczyzna, which are regarded as the material mementos of the multicultural past of this part of the country.” Through such words the organizers were giving encouragement to all those interested in this heritage.

The originator of the project is Krzysztof Gorczyca, the chairman of the Society for Nature and Man, an organization which has been active in Lublin for 10 years. The Society’s main field of interest is ecology, but for several years now it has also been involved in activities promoting the cultural heritage of the area’s villages. Krzysztof and the society have a special bond with the villages on the River Bug and in the Sobibor Forests. The place has enchanted him to such an extent that he bought a house and started to organize social projects. First, it was a spontaneous Christmas carol singing session with a group of friends (actors and musicians) who visited these parts of the country for a New Year’s Eve party. Later they worked

with local kids, conducting traditional music workshops, singing Christmas carols together, preparing a play based on local stories etc. Last year they organized an event which they called The Festival of Songs of the Marsh. There were concerts, workshops, dance parties, and a fair called *jarmark uspieński*.

This year Krzysztof invited Ewa Grochowska and Roman Jenenko to cooperate – lecturers at the International School of Traditional Music, actively involved for many years with a Lublin Foundation called Music of the Borderland. Roman is an ethnomusicologist, a graphic artist, and also a member of an artistic-research team called *Derevo* from Kiev. Ewa is a cultural philosopher and a member of a travelling Violin Group. She studied singing, dance and violin under the village masters from the Lublin, Radom and Kurpie regions.

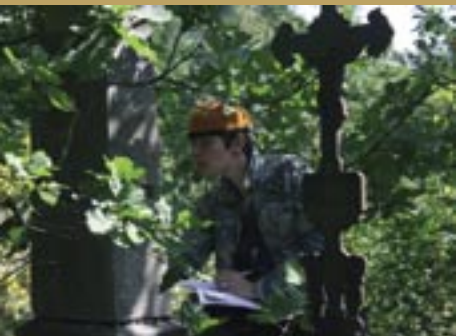


## Not a folk show

For ten days in August young Poles and Ukrainians worked to landscape the cemeteries in Kosyń, Kobylice and Siedliszcze. They sang, played traditional instruments and danced. They also watched films about village musicians and rituals that used to take place in cemeteries, as well as listening to lectures on traditional music and planning further developments of the project.

In the evenings, the courtyard of the school where they were staying filled up with music, dance and song, sometimes lively, sometimes melancholy. They sang traditional songs, which are slowly disappearing, songs, which in great measure, create the uniqueness of the culture of these regions and folk culture in general. “It is different from what the conventional folk dance and singing groups have to

Alicja Puchała



offer”, says Krzysztof. “When we see this kind of crude, unpolished material, in a single moment our whole being starts to play and sing.”

The songs they learned were chosen in order to give the participants the widest perspective for appreciating the

cemeteries which they had taken care of. To connect them not only to the bare stone, wood and bushes, but also to let them feel the meaning this place had for the village. To give them an idea of the life that was formerly lead here. They learned, among other things, harvest songs, lullabies, psalms and “rusalne” songs. They watched the lament of a woman forced to leave the Czernobyl region, crying because she couldn’t go to her mother’s grave. It is not hard to imagine that similar laments might have been sung by the Ukrainian people, forced to move out of the Lublin region between 1945 and 1947.

#### Forced displacement

They were forced to leave their homes. First, there was an exchange of people under the 1945 agreement between Poland’s communist authorities and the Soviet Union. The Bug unexpectedly acquired the status of a border through which millions of Poles and Ukrainians were – as it was then called – evacuated in both directions under the watchful eye of the NKVD. The year 1947 saw another stage in solving the Ukrainian issue when Operation Wisła was carried out. What remains unclear even today is whether the operation was intended to crack down on the Ukrainian nationalist underground or rather to create conditions for the quick assimilation of Ukrainians and the unification of society. Over 140,000 people were forced to leave their homes in Lubelskie, Rzeszowskie and Krakowskie Voivodeships and move in an unknown direction.

The communist propaganda concocted an overtly simplified version of the complex history of the south-eastern lands,

instilling Poles with a stereotype of Ukrainians as Bandera bandits, with the memory of the slaughter in Volyn, and with hatred that lasted for years.

Reality is usually much more complex than we would like it to be. Olga Urbańska, an 83-year old resident of Wola Uhruska, cares for the Orthodox Christian cemetery in Kobielice. When talking of old times, she rarely refers to “Ukrainians”, instead using the word “Orthodox Christians”. She notes that they, too, were Polish citizens. And still are. She talks of the local language that used to be spoken in the town. It was neither Ukrainian nor Polish. Although Wola Uhruska was an area free of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, a decision was taken to deport and resettle its inhabitants to what were known as the “Recovered Territories”. Olga says that, apart from her family, nobody stayed but that many of those resettled would later return home. Some found their houses occupied by Catholic Poles who had come from beyond the Bug River.

The Orthodox church remained standing but the priest had left taking with him the icons and the bells. It was only after 1956 that the parish was revived in Włodawa, a town not far off. Olga is one of the two Orthodox Christians living in Wola Uhruska. She is happy that there is someone who will selflessly care for the cemetery she is no longer strong enough to look after.

#### The cemetery, a special place

Krzysztof says that the cemeteries are places that evoke strong emotions, and none more so than the forgotten cemeteries, which do this in a special way. Banishment, being deprived of the contact with the place where your loved ones are buried, and not being able to care for their graves, must be a serious tragedy.

During their earlier walks across the Bieszczady Mountains and the Rostocze region, Krzysztof and his friends saw many neglected cemeteries. They thought that something must be done about it.

Considering the immense scale of the problem, they realized they couldn’t do it alone. They decided to direct their actions towards mobilizing the communities and the institutions which should care about saving the forgotten cemeteries. Krzysiek mentions municipal and district authorities that strongly promote the development of tourism in these areas, organizations involved in the protection of historical monuments, cultural promotion, intercultural cooperation and environmental preservation. Of course, church communities should also be interested, including both Orthodox and Greek Catholic for obvious reasons, but also the Catholic parishes. Since the time of resettlement, they have taken over many of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic church buildings in these areas. They transformed them into their own churches, forgetting, however, about the adjoining graves of those who had prayed there before them. It would be also important to involve both the present day and the former inhabitants of these regions. “It might be an opportunity for them to meet each other and work together in spite of the tragic history and do something for this place after 60 years,” comments Krzysztof. People engaged in the project hope, in addition to saving a few specific cemeteries, to inspire others and create the conditions to start a movement.

#### To take the matter out of the bushes

This year’s project Songs of the Marshes is over, but the team wants to continue working. The next workshop session is supposed to take place in November in Lublin. Village singers from Ukraine were invited, as well as a few groups that study directly under the guidance of the village masters. There is a plan to create a web page at the beginning of next year, and there are stormy discussions about its name and contents. What is important, the web page will contain detailed documentation of each cemetery included in the project, i.e. photographs and detailed descriptions

of the tombstones. These might help those people who were expatriated in their childhood to find the graves of their parents or grandparents.

Clean-up work as well as stone and reconstruction work will therefore continue.

A special promotional campaign is also being prepared: a conference of all the diverse institutions that might be interested in this subject and an exhibition in both Polish and Ukrainian versions, which will travel to different borderland towns and show the cemeteries and the initiatives undertaken to preserve them “in the hope that someone will become inspired and will take this subject out of the bushes,” – adds Krzysztof.

We left Wola Uhruska, recalling the warmth of the previous evening, spent in the company of the singing young people. We thought about Mrs. Olga, who sang too. And with these thoughts, we continued our journey. We travelled – although we didn’t plan it that way – along the trail of old cemeteries, roadside crosses, forgotten Orthodox churches, and pear trees gone wild and growing on forest clearings, discovering the last traces of the region’s former inhabitants. Sometimes we met elderly people who still vividly remembered celebrating double Christmases together and the War and the post-war turmoil that came later. They have no one to talk to about those by-gone times. Young people go to the towns to study and don’t come back. What would they come back to?

The people who remember, grow old and pass away. Forgotten cemeteries and Orthodox churches vanish as well. And together with them, the truth about the past.







Agnieszka Rayss, finished History of Art at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Since 2002 publishes photo-essays in *Polityka* weekly. In 2004 participated in a photojournalists workshop for emerging photographers from Eastern Europe, Turkey and Caucasus run by VII photo agency and the ngo *Alltemus*. Also in 2004 held an exhibition on International Human Rights during the OSCE conference in Warsaw with other workshop participants.

# Independent culture in Lviv



Agnieszka Rayss



Maritchka after the rehearsal of „Zamkovy Tien”.

Lviv used to be as European as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Now it is the biggest city of the Western Ukrainian borderland and is not in Europe, at least not as defined by the border of the European Union, though that is a mere 70 kilometres from here. Here is where Europe officially ends.

Agnieszka Rayss





Kurbas Theater, the oldest off theater in Lviv. A student is cleaning the floor before the training.

It used to be called “the capital of Ukrainian culture”. Now the most important artistic events take place in Kiev, the capital, but many artists still live and create their work in Lviv. Their problem is the lack of an art market in Lviv and the fact that the state does not support young artists. Around 50 rock groups exist in Lviv but except for the “Lalka” underground club they don’t have a place to perform. The only independent radio station in Lviv (“Radio Initiative”) closed a year ago, all the other stations broadcast mostly Russian pop music. In addition there are very few art galleries in Lviv and the independent theatre “W Koszyku” (“In the basket”) has been in existence for 9 years but still hasn’t got its own stage.



Rehearsal of the “W Koszyku” theatre’s new play – Volodia and Lidia.

People say that it has become peripheral. They comment on the real difference in their economic situation - Lviv’s city budget is about one tenth that of Krakow, the other major city in former Galicia, about 300 kilometers to the west of here in Poland.



Olenka is a soloist at the Polynove Pole methal group.  
Olenka is celebrating her birthday with her friends  
Julia and Aleksander.

However artistic life is flourishing. Young people are busy with their studies, families are busy earning money but they still find time to meet 2-3 times a week to play music together, to organize concerts or to discuss other artistic projects. The closeness of the border helps a lot – people are used to travelling, to observing what's new in neighbouring countries and to drawing inspiration from abroad. The nearness to the European Union has created some problems. People comment that it's a real border, not just a line. They need visas for all the EU countries, including Poland, their closest neighbour. But that doesn't prevent Lviv artists from travelling and exchanging their ideas.

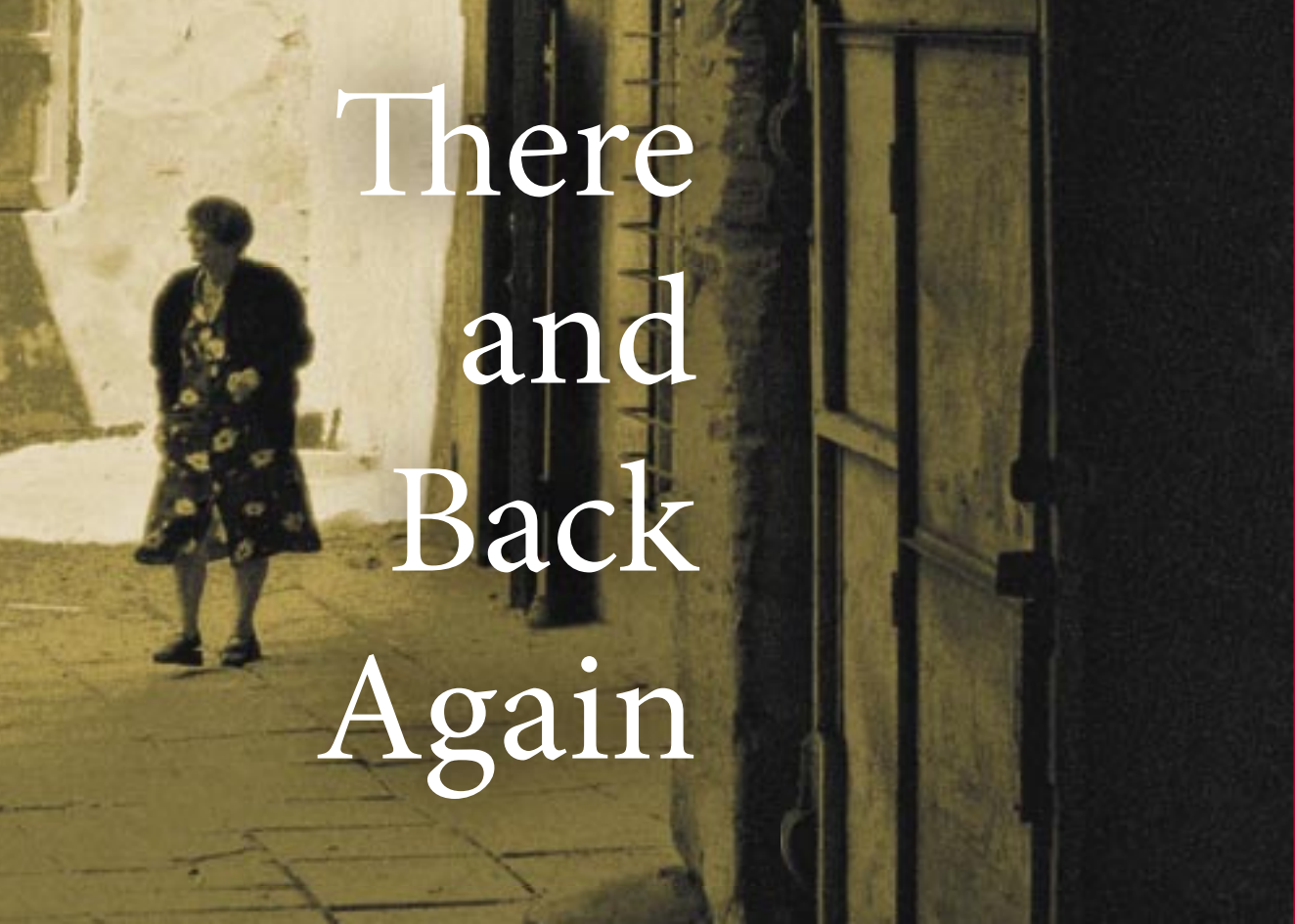


Kurbas Theatre in Lvov - the  
oldest „off” theatre in the city.  
Training for students.





Jacek Śpiewak, Polish photographer. Graduate of Krakow Academy of Economics (Computer Science Department). Had photography workshops in *clubOKOcafe* coordinated by e.g. Andrzej Kramarz, Michael Ackerman and Krzysztof Gieraltowski. In 2003 had an individual exhibition *Los ninos de los Andes*. Author of a reportage *Nie ma jak dreżyna*, published in *Przekrój* magazine and portraits published in *Marie Claire* magazine.



# There and Back Again



My grandfather Wincenty Kralka (left), during the Second World War took part in the September Campaign in Poland as a cavalry corporal. Wounded, he reached the field hospital in Zamość. Then he was evacuated to Lviv. When he heard about the approaching Red Army, he escaped from the hospital and, traveling mainly on foot, returned to Iwanowice – his home village near Cracow.





Lviv. Politechnika Lwowska  
(Lviv Polytechnic),  
Bandery Street. In September  
1939 – field hospital no. 601.

Zamość. Akademia Zamojska  
(Zamość Academy), before  
the Second World War – girls'  
grammar school. September  
1939 – field hospital. Nowadays  
– high school.







Iwanowice. The village of grandfather Wincenty.

Lviv. Bernardine's Church surroundings. Teodor (96). In September, 1939 a soldier of the Polish Army, then a prisoner of war and enforced worker in Germany. After the war he returned to Lviv.







Katsiaryna Tkachenka, Belarusian journalist. Graduate of Belarusian State University. From 2001 to 2004 worked on the *Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta* and *Vremya* newspapers. Prepared articles about the life of our neighbours from Lithuania and Ukraine, described the life of the Belarusian minority in Poland. Now is correspondent of the press-service of the United Civil Party in Belarus. Participated in an internship at Athens National University. Took first place at the International Competition of Young Journalists of Europe and Asia 9<sup>th</sup> *Ring Eurasia*, Kazakhstan. Laureate of the competition for the best article about Germany and other EU countries organized by the German Embassy in Belarus and the International Educational Centre.

# Alienation children

Red stains on the map of radio-active clouds which was published nineteen years ago look like a spread-out tumour. It affected villages and towns, arable agricultural soil, the forests of Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine, went through individual houses, families and stayed for good.

Later on, many of those who came into contact with the Chernobyl disaster admit that having experienced the deep trauma and feeling of complete loneliness, finally, they realised that they had to fight for their lives by themselves.

Nineteen years ago, those who lived 30 km from the Chernobyl power station were relocated immediately after the accident. They did not allow people to take their belongings with them, so favourite books, recordings and toys had to be left behind. Their houses were demolished to the ground, rammed flat and evened by bulldozers. People were resettled in the neighbouring regions which were considered to be clean at that time. Nonetheless, the wind carried radio-active clouds over there as well. The people were moved again. Their houses were not dug into the soil, as it was considered to be superfluous; they were simply abandoned and orphaned.

The land was divided into sectors: a sector of voluntary relocation, a sector of compulsory relocation, and a 30 km-wide protected sector in which human presence is forbidden. All together, it is called "an alienation sector". A word which is not commonly used in everyday life – 'alienation' – easily entered the vocabulary of local people.



Signs forbidding picking mushrooms in the forests do not scare the locals anymore. Forest food provides half of the diet of the people from polluted areas, and most of them cannot afford to buy clean food products.



Several years would pass and people, having missed their motherland, started going back to the alienation sector. They would go back home where there are no telephones, medical healthcare or schools. They went to a place where you are not allowed to live.

After the Chernobyl catastrophe, a doctor, Valentina Smolnikova, observed children living in the relocated villages of the Buda-Koshelevskiy region. It is not from official statistics but from her own practice that she found

out how the number of cancer-related diseases, as well as other illnesses connected to radiation, was growing.

– “Here people try to avoid strangers, they are reluctant to make contact, they do not like journalists,” – says Valentina Smolnikova. – “But they know me, that is why you will not have any problems.” In the company of Valentina we headed to villages which have become “the alienation sector”.

Moist, quickly-erected houses with leaking roofs and rotten sewerage pipes, this is the picture which we witness upon visiting the first village where we make a stop.

- These houses were built for workers of a local collective state farm, sovkhoz, but the families of the relocated from the territory affected by the

accident received them. Local people, who did not have their own houses, envied the settlers for getting a house for use without registering in a social queue. Later on, however, it turned out that there was nothing to envy: the houses were cold and badly-built and now we do not even have money to repair them, - tells Vera Dolgaya, a local villager.

Vera's husband was one of the liquidators of the after-effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe. Five years after the accident they had a daughter Anna. Soon, the girl was diagnosed with the severest form of diabetes. Valentina Smolnikova, as a paediatrician, is positive that Anna's illness is a consequence of the radioactive influence her father underwent. The girl needs the constant observation of an endocrinologist; however, the closest specialist clinic is 70 km away.

– After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese, who survived that horrible tragedy, were provided by the government with such conditions of life and medical supervision that the average life span of that category of citizen was the longest in Japan. “However, here the government remembers the problems of people living in the polluted territories only once a year, on the eve of the anniversary of the Chernobyl explosion.” – sighs the paediatrician, Valentina Smolnikova.

Nineteen years ago, the top government of the USSR did their best to hide the truth about the Chernobyl catastrophe from the Soviet people. The atomic reactor was still burning, radioactive deposits were spreading out for hundreds of kilometres. Meanwhile, in the Ukraine and Belarus the government forced people into the

streets under the burning sun to celebrate the 1st May holiday instead of taking care of urgent evacuation. The Belarusian government, afraid of panic, did not organise any special preventive training which was suggested by scientists, aimed at protecting people from radioactive iodine-131, which was accumulating in our thyroids. Enlargement of thyroid glands is one of the most common diseases of Belarusian society. But it is still not popular, as it was nineteen years ago, to talk about the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

The Belarusian state TV, deputies and local administrations tried hard to make Belarusians believe that it is possible to live in the polluted areas. People, who were not included in the relocation programme and were left in the affected area, for many years had various benefits: free sanatorium treatment, extra days off added to their holiday, schoolchildren – free meals. Today, however, they do not have such benefits. The leader of the state, Lukashenka, decided that the maintenance of Chernobyl people is quite costly. It is much easier to state that after 20 years the lands are clean. Very few were against Lukashenka's decision.

A Belarusian scientist, Yuri Bandazhevskiy, conducted research which proved that living in the polluted territories results in pathologies of certain organs in the human organism. Having published his results, professor Bandazhevskiy ended up behind bars. He was accused of taking a bribe; nonetheless, the implications of the court judgement were self-explanatory for many scientists.

– We are left to ourselves to survive - sighs the mother of little Lizochka Tsurganova.

Liza will soon be one year old. Liza is everybody's favourite girl; she is called “our baby-sun”. The older sister of Liza, Tatiana, was born with the severest pathology of heart muscle. She lived for only two and a half years. Back then, such heart operations were not performed in Belarus. The family did not even dream of an operation abroad. Afterwards, in Belarus, a programme called “Baby's Heart” would be launched, American cardio-surgeons would teach their Belarusian colleagues to operate on the most complicated cases. By then, the flowers would bloom on Tanechka's grave. Liza Tsurganova was born with organic heart disease but she has a chance to live a long life. So how can it be explained that Tsurganov's family, whose relatives never had heart disease, have sick children?

– A cell layer which covers the heart, first of all, suffers from radiation effects – Doctor Smolnikova explains.

But the Belarusian government does not see any advantages in recognising cause-effect dependency between children's diseases and the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe. It would only complicate their explanations to society that it is not dangerous to live in the polluted areas.

We leave the village and keep driving. Soon, we enter a forest. There are signs along the road: “picking mushrooms and berries is forbidden”. It is a zone of radioactive control. Past the forest, there is a deserted village called Zabolots. Along the road we are welcomed by empty houses, without windows and roofs.

– People were moved from here and the authorities left this land unprotected. Burglars carried out furniture and loaded firewood onto trucks. There were cases that disassembled wooden houses were sent to Russia and sold over there.



The Kozlovskiy's family. Their father has cancer, he did not allow anyone to take a picture of him ...

Please note that each house is a tiny reactor; guess how many of those spread out over the country, – again Valentina Smolnikova sighs.

We pass the names of the streets: Sovetskaya, Trudovaya, Kolkhoznaya...

And again, there are empty houses all over; drive-ways are overgrown with fern, burdock and wild bushes. The side walls of some houses have fallen deep into the ground.

Birches have grown on the roofs. Windows without glass panes look like empty eye-sockets...

You may not live here. But why are people coming back?

There used to be 50 houses in Sovetskaya Street. Now only two of them are inhabited.

In one of them an old woman lives her last years. Several years after the disaster, she was granted a flat in Gomel. But she decided to sell the flat, give the money away to her sons and come back to the village.

– Old people came back to the removed regions because they missed their homes, gardens or yards. Their children came back because they could not find a job in the city. There were also such people who became drunks, sold their flats and came back to their nests – tells us Valentina Smolnikova.

The Kozlovsky family of 5: dad, mum and three school-kids, came to the village in the mid-nineties from Kazakhstan. Father worked in the mine over there. When they closed the mine, he decided to come back to his motherland – to his mother's home. There was no other place to go to.

They have no chance of getting a flat in a clean area. In the mid-nineties the relocation programme was already closed.

We do not ask the master of the house how he makes his living. It is understandable anyway: he disassembles wooden houses and sells them. In the winter he heats his own house with the same firewood.

– But you can not do it, – exclaims Valentina Smolnikova. – Radiation dust, when burning, mixes with the air. And you have children around! – Well, if I went to the forest to get firewood, it would be the same. Trees have also absorbed radiation.

Guests very rarely visit the Kozlovsky family. That is why the kids happily circle a stranger-correspondent and volunteer to show me their possessions. They say that it is too far to go to school in the winter, and it is cold. But in the summer they have real fun: they can play in any yard, if you get hungry, you can pick pears, apples and cherries, as much as you wish.

Mushrooms, berries and fruit are the main diet in the summer and stock for the winter. The Kozlovskys are not scared anymore of warning signs which forbid mushroom picking in the forest. They do not carry products for check-ups either:

first of all, radiation control points are 25 km away from the village; secondly, there is nothing you can replace forest gifts with even if the family had money. There is no shop in the village. To be more precise, a mobile-shop does come once a week but the assortment of goods is quite standard: bread, honey cakes and tinned stewed meat.

Then, having gathered all the children, the doctor whispers: please, convince daddy to go to the hospital, to undergo his operation. The father of the family has lung cancer and refuses to have an operation.

– During our conversation he coughed all the time, – says Doctor Smolnikova on our way back. If lung bleeding starts, an emergency ambulance would not make it here... He is either afraid of it or it is as if he draws his death closer on purpose... But he has three kids...

Maybe, people who came back to this land, witnessing the indifference of the authorities towards them, have started to believe that they, indeed, do not have many years left to live. The above attitude causes indifference towards themselves, their family and their own future, doesn't it?

On the other hand, there is a shocking peculiarity. Right next to the deserted villages, where burglars enjoyed themselves to their heart's content, there are neat and clean cemeteries. Once a year, at Easter, people visit the graves of their family members, relatives decorating the tombs with flowers. Maybe, it is a sign that one day people will come back here...

Young children joyfully show their possessions. They say that it is too far to go to school in the winter, and it is too cold. But in the summer they have real fun. They can play in any yard, and if they get hungry, they can pick pears, apples, cherries, as much as they wish. They are not yet aware of the danger of this land, however, lurking beneath.



The older sister of Liza, Tatiana, was born with the heaviest pathology of heart muscle. She lived for only two and a half years. Liza Tsurganova was born with organic heart disease but she has a chance to live a long life. So how can it be explained that Tsurganov's family, whose relatives never suffered from heart pathology, have ill children?







Anastassia Zlatopolskaia, photographer from Saint-Petersburg in Russia. Finished the Photographic Journalism School in St. Petersburg. MSc in International Business (International Graduate Management School). Now takes photographs for magazines. Organizer of a photo contest with the Association for Russian-Turkish Friendship: *Russian Culture in Istanbul*. In November 2005 her exhibition devoted to the interesting fates of women *12 Russian woman and Istanbul* will open. Researching the life of White Russian emigrants in Istanbul; interested in folk music.

# IVANGOROD OR ACROSS THE ~FRIENDSHIP~ BRIDGE

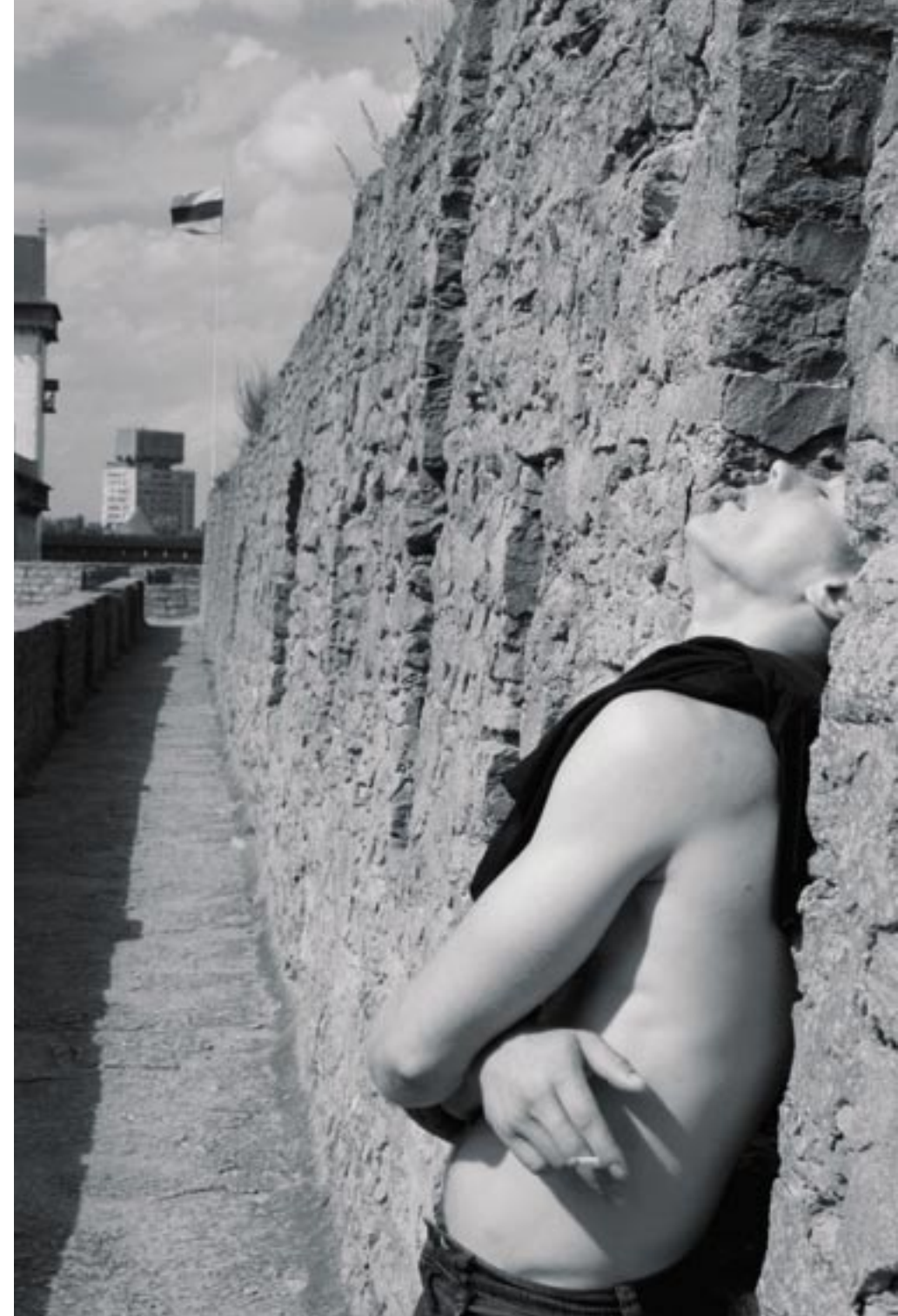
This report comes from Ivangorod, across the “Druzhiba” bridge from the eastern border of the European Union. The name of the bridge means friendship in Russian and connects two sides, two cities and two countries today: Narva, Estonia on one side and Ivangorod, Russia on the other.

For more than 50 years the two sides were like part of one whole before the Soviet Union collapsed. Many inhabitants of Ivangorod went to work in Narva and vice versa. Hundreds of people from Narva had their dachas (summer houses) on the Russian border and, at the same time, people from Ivangorod grew potatoes and vegetables in Narva. Two cities shared one life and the bridge was only a way to cross the river Narva, the natural obstacle in between.

Today the bridge of “Friendship” is fenced with barbed wire. A bag with potatoes can be called contraband. To see friends and relatives on the other side, a visa and passport are required. It can take hours to cross the 150-meter-long bridge. Still relations between the twin cities are maintained. Every day for different reasons around 5000 people cross the border, most of them are inhabitants of Narva and Ivangorod.

This report has been made to examine the presence and the influence of the border on the daily life of Ivangorod, including the life of the young generation.

Sasha works on the Russian-Estonian border. Enjoying his day off today.







He remembers the time when Narva and Ivangorod were like one city. Now he crosses the bridge to Ivangorod every Friday to visit a bania (Russian sauna) "its cheaper here" - he says.



The center of Ivangorod is a city market.





The view of the “Druzhba” bridge and Narva from the Ivangorod fortress wall.



The wire can not separate us from sharing the same beauty and understanding the freedom of our nature.

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