

OPEN SOCIETY NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOROS FOUNDATIONS NETWORK



PORTRAITS IN INDEPENDENCE:
Easing the Burdens of the Elderly

Winter 1999/2000



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The numerous nonprofit foundations established by the philanthropist George Soros are linked together in an informal network called the Soros foundations network. At the heart of this network is a group of autonomous organizations known as "national foundations" that operate in more than 30 countries around the world, primarily in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These foundations share the common mission of supporting the development and maintenance of open society. To this end, they operate and support an array of initiatives in educational, social, and legal reform. *Open Society News*, published quarterly by the Open Society Institute in New York, reports on the programs and grantees of the foundations in the network. For additional information, see the Soros foundations network website at www.soros.org or contact the Open Society Institute, 400 West 59th Street New York, NY 10019 USA; tel: (212) 548-0600; fax: (212) 548-4679; or e-mail: osnews@sorosny.org

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By Bojana Zezelj-Kovacevic

New Foundations in Kosovo and Montenegro

The end of hostilities in Kosovo last June left the region with fresh scars, more divisions, and continued tensions. The new political realities also presented new issues and challenges for the work of the Open Society Institute.

The Kosovo branch office of the Fund for an Open Society Yugoslavia (FOSY), which had been active since 1993, shared the fate of the Albanian people in the spring of 1999. The staff was dispersed, with the majority joining the forced exodus of Kosovo Albanians who found refuge in Macedonia. There they organized the Kosovo Refugee Program under the auspices of the Open Society Institute–Macedonia.

When the staff returned to Pristina three months later, the enthusiasm brought by waves of refugees returning home much sooner than expected offset the shock of an office completely looted: the walls bare and furniture and equipment gone. The real challenge was to continue working in the region with broken communication lines and destroyed infrastructure. In addition, the end of open conflict has not meant the end of a backlash of sporadic ethnic violence in the territory, which has resulted in a highly volatile security situation. Technical and logistical limitations, as well as the political complexities of Kosovo under United Nations administration, made it necessary to restructure the office and its activities.

The Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) was established as an independent foundation in June, with initiatives immediately launched in areas such as textbook publishing, education, the rule of law, local government, independent media, civil society, and human rights.

In November, the World Bank chose KFOS to cosponsor its first project in Kosovo: the Kosovo Community Development Fund. With expected financing of \$20 million, the Fund will support small-scale projects—programs for youth, war widows, and the elderly and disabled, as well as business development activities. Its two main objectives are to provide rapid, targeted support to help communities rebuild shattered infrastructure and improve services; and to support the capacity of local governments to better serve their communities in a transparent, fair, and

accountable manner. The foundation is seeking to establish similar partnerships and involve other donors and implementors in future projects.

CHANGES IN MONTENEGRO

In Montenegro, the election of Milo Djukanovic and his Democratic Party of Socialists in January 1998 began an economic and political process that set the republic on the road to reform and integration into the international community. Montenegro's

critical mass necessary for a democratic transformation, the office has benefitted from as well as contributed to a more favorable political and social environment. When the Montenegrin Parliament recently passed a new NGO law, one of the most liberal in the region, the procedural aspects of transforming the office into an independent foundation were simplified.

Announcing the birth of the Open Society Institute–Montenegro (OSIM) in November, the smallest of the network of foundations, George Soros said it would work “with the government, but not for the government.” OSIM’s program areas in the year 2000 include education, legal reform, local government reform, economic development, media, civil society, and arts and culture. The foundation will also work to enlist the assistance of other interested donors to support its role in the democratization of the country.

OSIM Executive Director Mirjana Popovic said that the transformation of the Montenegro branch office into an independent foundation was motivated by the fact that “a potential positive outcome of the democratic reforms that already started in Montenegro could initiate an array of stabilizing effects for the region.” Officials in Kosovo believe the same holds true for KFOS. Together with the foundations in neighboring Balkan countries, the two latest arrivals to the network are already involved in a project on regional cooperation as part of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, an international initiative aimed at further promoting integration. ☞



Photo by Ami Vitale

Kosovo Albanians in Lukosane, Kosovo.

pull away from Serbia has created a tug of war between the two remaining republics of the Yugoslav Federation. The precarious balance is further threatened by the division between Montenegrins who favor an independent republic and those who are firm believers in a union with Serbia.

The Montenegro branch office of FOSY has suffered the consequences of international economic sanctions, political repression, nearby wars, and a drastic drop in living standards since it opened in 1993. Its programmatic activities developed from supporting humanitarian efforts and educational and art programs to equipping classrooms with computers to intensifying support for independent media and civil society to promoting legal and economic reforms. Having helped create the

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Wiktor Osiatynski

The Changes of the Last 10 Years

Wiktor Osiatynski has a unique perspective on the changes in his native Poland and neighboring countries over the last decade. As a journalist in the spring of 1989, he observed the roundtable talks between the government and the Solidarity movement that ushered in a peaceful transition to postcommunist rule in Poland. Between 1990 and 1997, Osiatynski, who holds doctorates in law and sociology, was an expert advisor to all constitutional committees of Poland's Parliament. In 1992, he co-authored the country's draft Bill of Rights. He has taught constitutional law in Europe and the United States. He also serves on the advisory board of the Soros foundations network and is a past member of the Stefan Batory Foundation Board of Directors. On the eve of the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, Osiatynski talked with Todd Diamond.



How significant for Poland were the events in 1989 that led to the end of communism?

It was not a big deal in Poland. It was a big deal in 1989 in Czechoslovakia, in Berlin with the Wall, and even in Romania with the killing of the late President Nicolae Ceausescu. But in Poland the big deal was in 1980-81. That's when there was so much emotion and hope. That's when people were in the streets protesting. In 1989, the majority of people were tired of eight years of marshal law. Solidarity still had the support of the population, but no one knew how wide the support was. Solidarity underestimated the support it would have in the elections. The Communist Party did not realize it didn't have any support at all. The roundtable talks consisted of two elites that agreed to negotiations without including the people. No one at that moment believed the talks would have such a radical outcome.

When the communist bloc fell apart, the Poles felt good. Seventy percent of the people supported then Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and his government. There was incredible support for this first postcommunist government among the Poles. There was a lot of pride and expecta-

tions and hopes. But very soon it waned. Very soon it dissipated. No one really told the public that the country was bankrupt. The elections in June 1989 were primarily to say no to the communists, to say we want change. But most people believed that the ideas of Solidarity, which were old socialist ideas from the precommunist period—equality, better standards of living, social justice, workers' participation—would now be implemented, and there would soon be democracy and workers' rights. People hoped for such progress but they didn't get it because there was no money in the state's coffers. The communists said there was no money, but people trusted Solidarity, which was attacking the communists for not providing money.

How well has Polish civil society adapted to these changes?

We got a constitution that by itself is useless. We got democracy that will not help individuals be less oppressed by local elites and local powers. But the constitution allows people to organize themselves into various kinds of legal organizations and other NGOs outside the structure of government to make sub-

stantial societal changes. This is something Soros has always supported. Most of the foundations are now starting legal departments and legal programs, which is also an evolution. We must not fail to realize how incredible it is that one-third of mankind is slowly coming out of a horrible system and taking responsibility for their own lives in a transition to modernity.

What have been the biggest surprises for you over the last 10 years?

I continue to be surprised by what happened eight years ago. The first postcommunist government in Poland unleashed economic energy that had accumulated in common, simple, people for centuries. It never happened again on that scale, but during those first two years, the energy was visible in the streets, as if people had been released after a thousand years of oppression. It was incredible.

Moreover, as a social scholar, I believed that there were enduring ideas and values that could withstand change. I thought that while institutions, behavior, and even habits can be changed, one can hardly change values. Poland had an aristocratic nobility and intel-

ligentsia whose values were clearly against capitalism and materialism—and in favor of spirituality and religion and morality. I saw these supposedly most durable values vanish overnight. This was absolutely surprising. All these allegedly antimaterialistic characteristics of Polish high culture just fell apart overnight.

Were you surprised by the nationalist movements that sprouted in the region and, in some countries, took control of the government?

I was not surprised by former President Leonid Kravchuk in Ukraine and President Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia. In the countries in which you did not have any opposition leaders, the people in power simply changed their legitimacy, switching from socialist to nationalist. Actually the first to do this was not Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko or Milosevic, it was Ceausescu. He was permitted to make the shift and he did it, with some defiance, from 1965 on. To a lesser extent, Yugoslavia under Tito did the same. Milosevic played the nationalism card within Yugoslavia by pitting one group within the multiethnic state against another.

You mentioned Kravchuk and Milosevic. Isn't there a difference between the two?

Of course, there is a difference, because Kravchuk said to the Ukrainians, "We are Ukrainians, and now my basis of legitimacy is not communism, it's nationalism." He was ousted by President Leonid Kuchma because there was not much room for nationalism in Ukraine. What Milosevic did was use the vibrant tensions between ethnic groups and divide his multinational state into smaller states. Just to keep his power, he led the country into three wars that were horrible. Milosevic and the band around him are like warlords. They profit from war, so why should they stop it?

Which countries of the formerly communist bloc have advanced the most?

Without communism, it soon became evident that nothing was holding Eastern Europe together any more. Instead, there

were different countries with different traditions, different situations, and different positions. Of course, there were postcommunist similarities, such as the lack of institutions and the necessity to build institutions, but even the rudiments of political parties were different from country to country. It turned out, for example, that Hungary was far more advanced than Poland in economic changes. They had high debt, but they also had economic institutions that could start the economic reforms.

In Hungary, distinct political groups already existed in society—at least in the opposition leadership. The leaders first sat together and agreed on what they wanted from the communists. Then, with democracy, they smoothly divided into political parties. In Poland, with the relatively monolithic Solidarity as the opposition, democratization was initially destructive because it resulted in fighting among political leaders of Solidarity itself.

Moreover, Poland had private agriculture, which raised issues, while in Czechoslovakia, both the Czech and Slovak republics didn't have that many problems with farmers because they had concentrated agriculture into state farms. Very soon after the fall of communism, it became clear that

four or five countries—Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Poland, and later—much later—Slovakia, were leading the transition to democracy, both economically and politically.

What do you think has been the impact of the Soros foundations network on the transformation from communism to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe?

Underestimated—but I am in a very difficult position to assess it, because I am so involved in the foundations' work, so I add that caveat about my lack of objectivity. Originally, the foundations created or helped bring about the changes of the revolutionary period. They supported the artists and groups for modernity and also provided expert assistance. The foundations helped the traditional intelligentsia find new roles for themselves. In some places the strategy was successful, and in some other places it was less successful.

Now it is time to move in the direction of public policy, to focus on legal issues that go beyond the protection of human rights. This is a proper target for our work, because implementing the rule of law has turned out to be the most difficult aspect of the post-communist transition. 📌



Members of the Solidarity trade union marching in the streets of Warsaw.

Fighting the Threat of Tuberculosis

By Mia Nitchun

The prevalence of deadly new strains of tuberculosis, which have been spreading for several years and now threaten to spiral out of control, has prompted the Open Society Institute to collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Harvard University to raise public awareness of the threat.

With funding from OSI, Harvard Medical School's Program on Infectious Disease and Social Change recently released "The Global Impact of Drug Resistant Tuberculosis," a report that identifies the spread of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB).

In October 1997, the WHO first sounded the alarm about the spread of TB—labeling the airborne bacteria a "global emergency." The WHO issued an initial warning that MDR-TB—variants that are extremely expensive to treat—had emerged worldwide and was a particular threat in hotspots such as Russia, Latvia, Estonia,

and India. The new report confirms these findings in further detail.

According to the report, in industrialized countries, TB treatment costs about \$2,000 per patient but rises as high as \$250,000 per patient with MDR-TB, a price many countries confronting the outbreak cannot afford.

"MDR-TB is a man-made problem. When patients stop taking or don't take enough of the right medications, they develop resistance to the drugs, and then spread new drug-resistant strains of the bacteria," said the report's lead author Paul Farmer, an associate professor of social medicine at Harvard Medical School. "The rapid rise of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is a public health catastrophe of the first order."

The report notes the striking prevalence of MDR-TB in Russia and, in particular, its prison system. Statistics show that about 20 percent of TB patients in Russian

prisons have MDR-TB. "At this late date," the report states, "controlling TB within the penitentiary system will not suffice to stem the Russian epidemic of drug-resistant tuberculosis. A long list of factors has already ensured that the dimensions of the Russian epidemic of MDR-TB will dwarf those previously documented elsewhere."

OSI decided to fund the report to provide incontrovertible proof that the threat of MDR-TB is, in fact, immediate and global. The report underlines the importance of following the WHO's standard treatment, known as Directly Observed Therapy Shortcourse (DOTS), so that all TB patients receive appropriate treatment. In areas where MDR-TB is already a problem, the report calls for the rapid implementation of a "DOTS-Plus" approach, under close WHO supervision. DOTS and DOTS-Plus involve intensive monitoring and record keeping of patients' treatment—confirming that it is carried out correctly and completely.

To accomplish this, a massive infusion of new resources is urgently needed to bring the problem under control, according to Farmer. While the report outlines an effective approach to the exploding epidemic, it points out that without at least \$1 billion in new funding for TB treatment in the immediate future, MDR-TB will continue to spread.

"If new money isn't made available immediately, the epidemic may become virtually impossible to contain," Farmer said. "It is only a matter of time before MDR-TB becomes a serious threat in the West, and the cost of controlling it will be exponentially greater."

The report was released at a meeting last October of high-level government officials from the United States, Europe, Canada, and Japan. Participants also included delegates from several international aid organizations, including WHO Director General Gro Harlem Brundtland, the heads of the major TB-control implementing agencies, and representatives of key philanthropic institutions, including the Gates Foundation, which has recently designated public health as a primary focus. 

Mia Nitchun is a program officer in OSI's Public Health Programs. The report can be downloaded at www.soros.org/tb.

Photo © Chris Anderson/AURORA



A Russian TB prison ward.

By Sarah Margon

Many Russian classrooms are still known for their rote, uncreative styles of teaching, a relic of the previous authoritarian style in both education and government. As the latter has changed over the past 10 years, some motivated educators have begun pushing for more interactive teaching methodologies that encourage tolerance and independent thinking, both as an end in itself and as a way of teaching students about the changes in their country's legal system. In St. Petersburg, one program focusing on these changes is called Living Law.

Currently active in 20 secondary schools around St. Petersburg, Living Law brings law students into schools to teach young people which patterns of behavior are appropriate in different legal situations, as well as to offer practical knowledge that will increase career choices after graduation. The curricula emphasize mock trials, debates, and youth parliaments that spur young people's interest and involvement.

The St. Petersburg program is part of a larger international initiative called

Street Law, which teaches students about civil and labor law, labor and housing law, and human rights. In specialized textbooks, essential methodology is defined in clear and direct language for secondary students to comprehend the fundamentals of what they are learning. Lessons are written to fit critical thinking and open conversations while promoting the importance of democracy and the practical aspects of the rule of law.

The Open Society Institute's Street Law program was introduced in 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in 1998. A joint program of OSI's Children and Youth Programs and Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute, Street Law is based on

Living and Learning about the Law



A Street Law workshop for participants from nine countries in Celakovice, Czech Republic. Below, Ihar Kuzminich, a Belorussian teacher-in-training, participates in a role-playing exercise.



of the same name that was founded in 1972 by the Georgetown University-based NGO. It evolved into a Washington-based NGO. Street Law is a way of providing practical knowledge of the law in a practical way to enable all citizens to empower themselves.

After several years of success in the United States, the program has gained particular relevance to postcommunist societies, according to Gabriela Schwarz, Street Law, Inc.'s international program director. "As the people see the law applied practically, they are able to get a tangible sense of law during an uneasy transition," she said.

Street Law, as in many of the other sponsored Street Law programs in the region, young law students and the next generation of judges find it rewarding to teach people tenets of democratically new. "The children use this knowledge with confidence," said Oksana Bryzgalina,

a third year student at the St. Petersburg Law School and a participant of the Living Law program. "Overall, the course will contribute to the improvement of the legal culture of teenagers which will ultimately permeate the rest of society."

While the program in St. Petersburg has been operating for nearly two years, programs in other countries are still in various stages of development. Care is being taken to make sure that the programs are established with the cooperation of local educational institutions, according to Astrid Benedek, OSI's Street Law program officer.

"The coming year will be very important for the long-term sustainability of the Street Law program: materials will be finalized and fine-tuned, and large-scale teacher training will ensure that the program enters a large number of schools," Benedek said.

Program officers and faculty members believe that as students learn more about their own country's court systems and judicial processes, participating governments will increase their support for the program. "The continuation and success of this program depends on political development in each country," said Schwarz. ☐



VOICES OF YOUTH

Using media to deal with death

Two OSI programs in the United States give young people a platform to explore their feelings of loss and the impact it has on their generation.

By Iowaka Barber

Death is a reality many teenagers must confront long before they grow up. Statistics show that 20 percent of children in the United States today will have experienced the death of a parent by the end of high school. One in every 1,500 secondary school students dies each year, and 12 percent of all childhood deaths are caused by guns in accidents, suicides, and murders. Eleven children a day are killed in the United States.

Despite these disturbing numbers, little is written or broadcast in the media about death and bereavement from a teen's point of view. Two U.S.-based OSI programs, Youth Initiatives and the Project on Death in America (PDIA), joined forces last summer to address the lack of youth perspective on death in the media. Their

collaboration—called the Summer Media Institute—enabled 60 young people from New York City's underserved communities to explore the variety of teenage experiences of death through media such as photography, websites, documentary videos, writing, and radio productions. "These projects, created by teens for teens, produced powerful stories and insights into their lives," said Erlin Ibreck, OSI's Youth Initiatives director. "The projects investigated issues of death and its impact on teenagers."

Take, for example, the Summer 1999 edition of the *Urban Chronicles*, published by the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health. The mission of the Arthur Ashe Institute is to address the social and cultural issues that impact America's medically underserved urban communities through innovative community health and educa-

tional training programs. This summer the academically talented minority high school students enrolled in the Institute's Health Science Academy spent eight weeks researching and writing about youth and their experiences of death.

"Along the way the participants confronted many social norms which impeded their quest for an understanding of death," said Rosalind Wilson, director of the Health Science Academy. "As we watched them dialogue about and struggle with issues of privacy, cultural norms and familial secrets, we witnessed a sense of hope for a future in which we will come to terms with our fears and the issues that keep us from openly discussing death and dying. These youth have certainly shown the way!"

The newspaper included poetry, interviews, and personal reflections, which portrayed the struggles of the youth to philosophically understand death. One participant, Alwin Jones, wrote, "The reality of death usually enters our worlds when someone we know experiences the cessation of life. Yet, death is never very far away. Life is never that certain. Death awaits us all. We must try to understand its meaning and talk about it."

Another exploration involved the Photographic Center of Harlem (PCH). As people pass by the nondescript door on Harlem's busy 125th Street, few would guess that the young people entering and



exiting that door with cameras in their hands were all photojournalists engaged in documenting the harsh realities of their lives. As a part of the Summer Media Institute, PCH Executive Director Jim Belfon created an eight-week series of photographic and computer graphic workshops that not only increased the visual literacy of the participants, but also provided each young person with the opportunity to articulate his or her feelings through the camera lens.

“We wanted to provide a positive, life-giving project,” said Belfon, “so we decided to focus on photographing beautiful things found in nature, like flowers and trees, which, if you think about it, have their own natural cycles of life and death.” The participants also superimposed on their pictures poetry that described their feelings about death and loss.

Two other programs which participated in OSI’s Summer Media Institute, Youth Communications and the Educational Video Center, are currently working on their projects, while independent producer Joe Richman’s radio project, “Diary of a Goodbye,” will be broadcast next year on public radio. “Diary of a Goodbye” will offer a rare inside look into one family’s experience with death through the words of its members.

Other projects included the Harlem Writer’s Crew, which used ethnographic methods to examine the graffiti art that often

appears on walls in predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods as a memorial to community members who have died. And the Global Action Project helped five young people create a compelling website that focuses on the relationship between death and abuse in America. The kids not only designed the site, www.global-action.org/webshop, but also created the content.

FOSTERING DISCOURSE

“By documenting this exploration of the teenage experiences with death, the participants make the experiences available to others,” said Edward Sunderland, PDIA’s program officer for community organization. “This validates the experience by bringing it into the realm of discourse.”

Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV) has been leading explorations of these ideas in many ways. By offering young people from low-income and minority communities access to the most advanced cameras and editing systems available and teaching them skills such as camera operation, videotape editing, and interview techniques, DCTV allows them to produce insightful and artistic documentaries, which they would not otherwise be able to do. Public screenings and discussions have also added to the discourse.

At one recent DCTV workshop that was part of the Summer Media Institute, 17-year-old Aaron joked that his friends no longer want to spend time with him

because he is always taking the fun out of things by critiquing them. “I can’t really enjoy going to the movies or watching TV anymore,” he quipped. “I’m too busy checking out the lighting and the head shots. This class has definitely ruined me.”

Through their work with DCTV, Aaron and the six other teenagers have developed a new perspective on life and death. Twice a week for eight weeks they huddled around teacher Renata Gangemi in an old firehouse in New York’s Chinatown learning to produce a 25-minute documentary, *R.I.P.: Teens Coping With Death*, that chronicles the experiences of several of their friends who have lost a loved one.

Project partners Rubin and Orlando explained how they were filming a friend of Rubin’s who was recounting the death of his father when all of a sudden Rubin’s friend broke down in tears. Rubin had never seen his friend cry and had to grapple with the dilemma of whether or not to stop the camera. Orlando noted that until he got involved in creating the documentary, he had always been scared to express emotions, especially around men.

Others agreed that the project has taught them the value of being expressive. “Our documentary is by teens for teens,” Iscania said, “and it tells them they are not alone.” “Yeah,” Jamal chimed in, “it teaches youth to deal with the most difficult occurrence in life.”

The Project Syndicate Promotes Critical Discourse

The Project Syndicate, a global association of independent newspapers established by OSI's Privatization Project, seeks to break the psychological barriers to democracy and free markets that still hinder development of postcommunist countries.

By Ken Murphy

Once, when asked to describe the meaning of the French Revolution, the late Chinese Premier Zhou En-lai quipped that it was “still too soon to tell.” Ten years after communism’s collapse in Eastern Europe, much of the meaning of that unexpected revolution also remains in dispute. Or so it seems from a meeting in Vienna last summer that gathered together some of the leading participants from those epic events of 1989, as well as politicians and intellectuals who have been grappling with 1989’s consequences.

The forum for this discussion was the annual meeting of the member newspaper editors of the Project Syndicate, an association of 62 newspapers, from 47 countries, with more than 9 million readers around the world. Jointly hosted with the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, and funded by the city of Vienna and the Austrian government, the meeting brought together political leaders such as Vaclav Havel, Viktor Orban, Aleksander Kwasniewski, Adam Michnik, Sergei Kyrienko, and Zbigniew Brzezinski with Project Syndicate editors for two days of discussions exploring the consequences of the events of 10 years ago.

The official program was only a part of the meeting. The other, less glamorous but perhaps more important, part was a series of working sessions of the member editors, including editors-in-chief or their deputies from the Project Syndicate’s member papers (see box, p. 11). During these meetings, the editors had the opportunity to discuss the Project Syndicate’s offering and activities, shape its operations for the coming year, and forge closer ties among each other—ties that result in collaborative ventures, internships for journalists from developing and postcom-

munist papers at more established member papers, and a variety of training programs.

BREAKING BARRIERS

Communism’s collapse in Europe removed the ideological framework that shaped global politics and economics throughout the 20th century. Against this backdrop, newspapers play a vital part in defining the meaning of democracy, the role of government, and the importance of free markets, both in postcommunist countries and in developing nations. But if open societies are to arise and succeed where communism and despotism once reigned, psychological barriers must be brought down as well.

This was the inspiration for the founding, in 1993, of the Project Syndicate, which took as its mission the forging of a viable global vehicle for broadening debate and exchanging ideas between East and West. But the Project Syndicate is more than a publishing venture; it provides an infrastructure to connect papers from relatively isolated countries like Kyrgyzstan and Cambodia, develops ongoing contacts and working relations among member papers, as well as internships, training, and a variety of other support mechanisms for its hardest pressed members.

The Project Syndicate is an outgrowth of the Privatization Project, an international initiative of the Open Society Institute that was established to help postcommunist countries move beyond their initial experience of independence toward integration into the broader European and Asian communities.

To foster continuous cooperation among its member editors, the Project Syndicate established e-mail links among most of the member papers and is in the

process of helping the remaining papers get online. Member papers are encouraged to exchange information and materials published in their papers, as well as to cooperate on reporting projects. The Project Syndicate’s website (www.project-syndicate.cz) contains extensive information about the Syndicate and its member papers, past syndicated materials, and links to the websites of member papers.

The Project Syndicate’s publishing activities are funded by member papers in the richer countries of Europe, Asia, and Latin America, which pay fees for the commentaries they receive. Such fees, in turn, allow the Syndicate to offer its publications free of charge to member papers in poorer postcommunist and developing countries. Support for the Project Syndicate’s nonpublishing operations—training, infrastructure and networking services designed to connect newspapers from poorer countries with the wider world—has, from the Syndicate’s founding, come from OSI. Over the years, support has also come from a number of other sources, such as the Eurasia Foundation, the World Bank Institute, the European Cultural Foundation, Die Zeit Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and the Reuters Foundation.

The publications of the Project Syndicate are diverse and target the most pressing international issues. Perhaps the most influential are its weekly commentaries that tackle the most divisive global and regional issues. The Project Syndicate’s very first column, published in December 1993, introduced the idea of a NATO/Russia forum to a wider Russian public, and was the subject of debate in the Russian Duma the week of its appearance. It was in Project Syndicate commentaries that Mladen Dinkic put forward

his proposals to unite the anti-Milosevic forces in Serbia, and that, the following week, Aleksa Djilas wrote his response.

The Syndicate also distributes two monthly columns on global economic issues by Jeffrey Sachs and Rudiger Dornbusch. "These articles have helped raise public and governmental understanding of the external events buffeting Cambodia," said Pen Samarith, editor of Cambodia's *Rasmee Kampuchea*.

A FOCUS OF JOURNALISTIC TRAINING

The Project Syndicate is also concerned with raising the professional standards and capacities of its members in postcommunist and developing countries. To this end, the Project Syndicate established partnerships or close cooperative relations with a number of organizations, such as the European Journalism Centre (Maastricht), the Freedom Forum, the Knight Foundation, and the Jan Masaryk Centre of International Studies (Prague). Together with these institutions, the Project Syndicate runs numerous training programs, specifically tailored to the needs of member papers, including specialized sessions for investigative journalists, reporting on ethnic minorities, and the ethics of photojournalism.

Training individual journalists, however, is not enough, particularly in the postcommunist countries. Although much is changing in the way the press operates, journalists often need to be not only trained, but also empowered. Reporting on economic issues is a particularly problematic area: government departments and business leaders hand out press releases or make proclamations in staged interviews which are then recycled in the newspapers. Genuine access to policymakers is often closed; internal debates, competing views, and underlying assumptions are rarely put on display.

Recognizing this problem, the Project Syndicate is now creating an international network of Economic Press Clubs in postcommunist countries. The Clubs are intended to provide reporters with access to high-level international and domestic policymakers in a context in which journalists can probe for information; reliable background sources of information on economic issues; contacts with similar organizations in the other postcommunist countries; contacts with their colleagues in the advanced countries; and access to training in the specific areas of business and financial reporting.



Timothy Garton Ash, Victor Orban, Vaclav Havel, Viktor Klima, and Adam Michnik at the Vienna conference last June.

The first club in the network, the Economic Press Club of Romania, was opened in June 1999, with Romanian President Emil Constantinescu and other members of the Romanian government on hand. Since then, the Project Syndicate has received requests from journalists and editors in other countries, such as Latvia, which is likely to be the site of the next Economic Press Club initiative.

Like the Project Syndicate's Vienna conference, the opening of the Economic Press Club of Romania provided a meeting where working journalists in postcommunist countries could probe political leaders on the vital issues of the day. Empowering journalists in the transition countries to do just that is the ongoing purpose of the Project Syndicate. 

Ken Murphy is the editor of the Project Syndicate.

PROJECT SYNDICATE MEMBER NEWSPAPERS

ALBANIA: Koha Jone	FINLAND: Helsingin Sanomat, Kauppalehti	MONGOLIA: Ardin Erk
ARGENTINA: La Nacion	FRANCE: Liberation	NETHERLANDS: De Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad
ARMENIA: Aikakan Zhamanak	GERMANY: Die Welt	NORWAY: Aftenposten
AUSTRIA: Der Standard	GREECE: To Vima	PERU: El Comercio
BELARUS: Belaruskaya Gazetta, Brestski Courier, Naviny	HUNGARY: Figyelo, Nepszabadsag	POLAND: Rzeczpospolita
BELGIUM: De Financieel, Economische Tijd	ICELAND: Morgunbladid	PORTUGAL: Economia Pura, Publico
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: Business Magazine, Oslobodenje	IRELAND: Irish Times	ROMANIA: Revista 22, Romania Libera
BRAZIL: Folha de Sao Paulo	ISRAEL: Ha'aretz	RUSSIA: Nezavisimaya Gazeta
BULGARIA: Bulgarski Business	ITALY: Il Sole, La Repubblica	SLOVAKIA: SME, Trend
CHILE: El Mercurio	JAPAN: Asahi Evening News, Ronza	SLOVENIA: Delo
COLOMBIA: Dinero	KAZAKHSTAN: Caravan	SPAIN: El Pais
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CZECH REPUBLIC: Ekonom, Mlada Fronta Dnes	LATVIA: Diena	SWITZERLAND: Neue Zurcher Zeitung
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ESTONIA: Luup	MEXICO: Reforma	UKRAINE: Den
	MOLDOVA: Logos Press	UZBEKISTAN: Optovik
		YUGOSLAVIA: Koha Ditore



These photographs depict the lives of several older people who benefit from the services of OSI-supported geriatrics and gerontology programs in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Ana Maria Mateescu (left) is shown here at home in Bucharest with Laura Adam. All photos by Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert.

PORTRAITS IN INDEPENDENCE: Easing the Burdens of the Elderly

New caregiving organizations in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provide a range of health and social services for older people, enabling them to live independently with dignity.

By Todd Diamond

Ana Maria Mateescu is 84 and lives alone. Twelve years ago, she and her husband Ion were victims of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's vain gesture to the city of Bucharest. Ceausescu bulldozed about a third of the city's historic district to make room for a wide boulevard leading up to the enormous "People's Palace." The Mateescus were forcibly evicted and relocated to a Soviet-style pre-fab apartment.

They packed up and moved in three frantic days. Six weeks later, their dramatic upheaval was horribly compounded when Ion succumbed to heart disease and died.

Mateescu lives on a pension of \$50 a month, having retired 27 years ago from her job as an accountant in a government ministry. These days she stands on her fourth-floor balcony overlooking rows of similar apartment blocks and remembers the hiking and skiing vacations she and her husband took in the Carpathian mountains.

For the past four years, the balcony is about as far as Mateescu has journeyed. In 1995, she fell and fractured her hip. Her doctor told her that surgery to replace her hip was expensive and dangerous. What she needed to do was stay home and rest. Mateescu's sister, Ivona Niculescu, moved in to help her with her recuperation, a long and painful process. Mateescu became dependent on her sister, but last fall she too passed away.

Without children or anybody else to help her, Mateescu could have easily fallen through the cracks of a public health and social service system that, like the systems of many other countries, is unable to provide the basic needs of a growing population of older people. But Mateescu's doctor referred her case to the Geron Foundation, a Romanian NGO that operates a community care service for the elderly in Bucharest with the support of the Open Society Institute's Geriatrics and Gerontology Program. For the past three years, the Geron Foundation has helped Mateescu live at home and retain her independence.

In Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, older people have suffered many hardships during the period of transition, and over the past decade have become the region's forgotten generation. Declining pensions, emigration of family members, and a lack of community-based services have left many older people with no one to turn to for assistance. Government institutions have failed to keep up with the increased demand for services for an aging population. This failure has prompted the development of caregiving as a profession. Initially practiced on an informal basis, caregiving is gaining institutional recognition with the participation of a growing number of NGOs.

The primary objective of OSI's Geriatrics and Gerontology Program when

it began three years ago was to introduce new ideas and approaches to the care of the elderly, with a particular focus on community-based programs. It funded more than 100 model projects, including home care services, day care centers, hospice care, and intergenerational programs. Currently, 19 countries in the region are participating in the program.

The Geriatrics and Gerontology Program aims to promote health and social services that enable frail—but otherwise healthy—older people to live in their own homes rather than in institutions. OSI supports the work of local NGOs such as the Geron Foundation that provide home nursing services, hot meals, day care, and respite services, as well as social and psychological support through visiting companion services, self-help groups, psychotherapy, and volunteer programs.

Caregiving, though a relatively new field in Romania, has been popular from the start. "I had a lot of problems choosing staff in 1995, because there were so many people who wanted to work for us," explained Aurelia Curaj, president of the Geron Foundation. "The most important criterion, of course, was having a good disposition for working with old people."

Curaj also found that younger nurses were more suitable than experienced nurses. Many of the nurses who lost their jobs during the economic downturn of the



Cancer patient Magdalena Molnar (left) at home in Cluj-Napoca with her daughter-in-law.

1990s were less willing to change their way of thinking from the traditional hospital setting to the more flexible home care environment, according to Curaj.

When Mateescu's case was referred to the Geron Foundation, Curaj gave it to Laura Adam, then a 22-year-old nurse who had previously worked in a hospital emergency room. Adam, who now has a

total of 24 patients, finds great satisfaction in caring for older people like Mateescu. "I can help old people or young people," she said, "but the elderly need more help."

For the past three years, Adam has visited Mateescu about twice a week, helping her with her medicine and diet, bathing her, and providing her with psychological

support after her sister died. As part of the caregiving program, a housekeeper comes three times a week and a family doctor visits Mateescu when necessary.

Mateescu, who enjoys offering Adam advice about her personal life, appreciates everyone's help. "If the girls didn't come here," she said, "I don't know what I'd do."

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LEADERS

In addition to funding direct services, the OSI program supports local groups involved in advocacy on policy issues for the benefit of the elderly, and in training and education efforts based on the principle of community-based care. Training is offered to physicians, nurses, social workers, other caregivers, and even volunteers.

"We believe that we have supported a sufficient number of pilot projects to date, representing a critical mass of good practice," said Srdjan Matic, director of OSI's Public Health Programs. "A strong network of leaders in home- and community-based care has emerged, and their model projects are beginning to attract the interest of local governments."

One of those leaders is Valentin Vladu, executive manager of the Foundation for Community Care Services in Bucharest, another OSI grantee. He was a family physician at the largest health clinic in Bucharest in 1992 when he decided to create a program specifically for the elderly.

His organization began by delivering hot meals to Alzheimer's patients at home, which met with initial suspicion from recipients, whose communist past made them doubt Vladu's benevolence. Seven years later, Vladu's organization has overcome the skepticism and grown into an extensive training program for home care workers throughout the country. He has also garnered the support of the Romanian government as well as international aid agencies.

"We studied all the care systems in other countries and adapted to the Romanian culture what worked," Vladu said in his organization's office, which is located in a single room in Bucharest's Emergency Hospital.

His knowledge of care systems in other countries comes from several fellowships outside Romania, including one in 1994 at Case Western Reserve University in the United States. During his four



Melinteana Selagea (left) gets help with her physical therapy from Liana Tamasu.

months in Cleveland, Ohio, Vladu was assigned to a nursing home and a community services organization, where he learned firsthand how to manage a range of social services. The Geriatrics and Gerontology Program has sponsored the participation of a total of 30 doctors, nurses, and social workers from Central and Eastern Europe in the fellowship program at Case Western Reserve University.

In 1995, the Foundation for Community Care Services piloted its first project, Home Care for Elderly People. "We had to start from scratch," Vladu said. "The people targeted to become members of the home care team—family doctors, nurses, social workers, and unemployed individuals seeking to become



Viorel Todan received assistance recovering from a stroke.

home care aides—had little awareness of the practice of patient-centered care in the home."

So Vladu began training them. As a prerequisite to employment as a home care aide, everyone, regardless of their medical background, is required to take the 10-day, 80-hour training program, which covers topics ranging from team building to elder abuse and neglect. Since 1997, the project has trained about 600 people in Bucharest and several other Romanian cities.

One trainee was Alexandra Tudor, a technical designer at an architectural firm in 1996 when, like many other victims of Romania's economic woes, she lost her job. She first took a training course in accounting, but after deciding she did not want to work with numbers, she tried Vladu's course. "I like working with the elderly because I lost my parents," she said. "Our team is like a family." Now she works as

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

Through a variety of in-country and international programs, the Soros foundations network spends more than \$40 million annually to develop and promote improvements in public health. The lack of basic health care in many countries is a major obstacle to the network's common mission of transforming closed societies into open ones and expanding the values of existing open societies.

The network's Public Health Programs support the development of the public health policies and infrastructures needed to respond adequately to public health problems and provide adequate health care and social services in participating countries. In addition to the Geriatrics and Gerontology Program featured in these pages, the Public Health Programs consist of the following:

Public Health Initiatives provides grants for innovative public health projects that introduce institutional change, promote effective public health policy development or offer new approaches to health care in specific areas from infectious diseases to medical ethics. This program funded the three-year, \$12 million project to establish sustainable tuberculosis control systems in civilian and prison populations in Russia (see page 6).

The Hospital Development Project provides donated equipment and supplies to hospitals in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Mongolia.

The International Harm Reduction Development Program promotes rational and pragmatic drug and AIDS prevention policies and practices in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It is a joint initiative of the Public Health Programs and The Lindesmith Center, which works for the adoption of measures that will reduce the harm caused by both drug abuse and drug control policies. The Center, formerly one of

OSI's U.S. programs, is now an independent organization.

The Medical Internet Project promotes the use of modern information technologies in public health and medicine.

The Mental Disabilities Advocacy Program supports the personal and professional development of people affected by mental disabilities, both psychiatric and developmental (see Summer 1999 *Open Society News*).

The Salzburg Medical Seminars and Schweitzer Seminars present current Western medical technologies and information to health care professionals in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The seminars offer opportunities for collaboration on comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches to health care delivery.

The Thomas Jefferson University Ultrasound Training Centers Program works to establish high-quality training centers in ultrasound technology and diagnostic imaging.

A number of OSI's U.S. programs advance public health in the United States and internationally. **The Reproductive Health and Rights Program** promotes the development of policies and practices to protect women's comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including safe abortion. Its international initiatives include support for a health care project in northern Haiti to improve maternal and child health and reduce unwanted fertility. Collaborations are also planned with the Public Health Programs for safe motherhood and safe abortion projects in Eastern Europe.

Another U.S. program, the **Project on Death in America** (see page 8), is also collaborating with the Public Health Programs to develop a regional Palliative Care Initiative that will support training programs and fellowships for health care professionals dedicated to improving hospice and palliative care services.



Participants of the Manastur Day Care Center in Cluj-Napoca meet regularly to share stories and snacks.

the home care coordinator for the Foundation for Community Care Services.

FUTURE COLLABORATION

Beginning in 2000, OSI's Geriatrics and Gerontology Program will concentrate on improving national standards of care and promoting the sustainability of OSI-funded model projects and other innovative services for the care of the elderly. These efforts will include bringing in as many interested local governments as possible. "Local authorities are responsible for providing a significant portion of services to the elderly," said Matic. "So we have decided to focus our activities on promoting cooperation among local governments, NGOs, and private enterprise in order to

develop and finance services."

Services traditionally offered by the state's medical establishment in Eastern Europe can now be provided by the non-governmental and private sectors. In 1998, Dan Baciu founded the Foundation for the Care of the Elderly in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca. The organization offers home care services, palliative care services,

"Our goal is to provide an environment in which people can decide for themselves what they want."

and an adult day care center open to any of Cluj's elderly population who want to socialize with their peers.

"We came with our own ideas about what was needed, but now more than half

the activities are the people's choice," said Baciu, who first proposed that OSI initiate a geriatrics and gerontology program in 1995. "We needed to provide something at the outset, because people didn't know what was possible. Now our goal is to provide an environment in which people can decide for themselves what they want."

The diversity of the activities—and

benefits—of the Foundation for the Care of the Elderly attest to its value. Melinteana Selagea is a widow who lives alone. Overall, she is in great health and great spirits. Several months ago she successfully underwent hip replacement surgery, but afterwards her surgeon sent her home to recuperate because the hospital could not offer the necessary physical therapy. Baciu's organization provided her with a physical therapist, and a few months later she was again her vibrant self.

Like Selagea, most visitors to the adult day care center are in good health and good spirits. They like to spend their days socializing, and when someone needs help, they can rely on each other. One of the center's regulars, Joan Gligan, suffered a fate that had nothing to do with his health, but his friends came to the rescue nonetheless. "I went to get my pension and on my way home I got robbed," he explained one afternoon in a crowded room at the center. "The people at the club collected money for me to help me get through the month." 



Joan Gligan (second from right) and his friends gather outside the Manastur Day Care Center.

Measuring Progress Toward a Just Society

In this issue's Viewpoint, South African President Nelson Mandela reflects on the recent changes in his country. He argues that patriotism is a force that can protect an open and democratic society, and calls for a national partnership to alleviate poverty. This article is based on a speech Mandela gave last fall as part of an annual lecture series at the Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

If I survey the road traveled in this one individual life—from the first decade of the century to this point at the close of the millennium—I cannot but marvel at the almost indescribable progress logged by humankind. There could be found enough cause for despair if we note the misery and suffering which human beings continue to bear and to inflict one upon the other. Yet I cannot find it in me to succumb to a pessimism which denies the essential capacity of the human spirit for greatness and generosity.

We in this country should need no reminders of that indestructibility of the human spirit and of the capacity of good to triumph over evil. The struggle waged for the better part of this century against racial discrimination and oppression should be a constant reminder thereof. Sometimes, in the South African public lexicon, the phrase “the struggle” is employed with a dismissive banality as if referring to a passing political fashion to which some subscribed. This denies the fact that our fight to end apartheid was universally acknowledged as one of the great moral struggles of our times.

The enemies of the open society, we have been taught by famous writers and thinkers, are manifold and their manifestations often quite sophisticated. Nothing could have been more crudely closed than

a political and social order based simply on color and race. Apartheid was a crime against humanity not only because of the physical violence and brutality it dealt in. Its intrinsic racism demeaned and debased all of humanity. The primitive biological basis upon which it coercively organized human society was fundamentally antithetical to the idea of human freedom; to the concept of human beings as subjects with the capacity to exercise choices.

We overcame all of that through a long struggle which demanded great sacrifices from many, as well as simple affirmations of decency and a refusal to bow to baser instincts on the part of many more. Ultimately the struggle against apartheid triumphed through the cumulative effects of a profound partnership of forces and people. The liberation movement that led the resistance against apartheid typified this coalition of energies in the imagery of the four pillars of struggle. It brought together the energies of armed struggle, underground resistance, mass mobilization, and international solidarity. The mass democratic movement tapped into and drew on the resources of all sectors of society. The struggle brought together the efforts of the good men and women that were to be found in all communities and persuasions of our society.

Was such an all-embracing partner-

ship, such a closing of ranks, in any way an offense to the idea of openness and the open society? Could the disciplined and single-minded dedication to combat a crime against humanity, and the mobilization of all of society in that cause, be faulted in this regard?

We pose these questions because in the first five years of democratic rule in our country, government continued to stress the importance of an all-embracing partnership, this time in the cause of the reconstruction of society. This remains an equally strong emphasis of the second democratic government.

We now live in a constitutional state based on the rule of law. The Constitution, with its entrenched Bill of Rights, is the supreme law of the land, a status constantly confirmed by the judgements and pronouncements of the Constitutional Court. Diversity and difference are recognized and protected by the Constitution, which furthermore guarantees a range of civic freedoms in the Bill of Rights. There can be no argument that South Africa has the legal foundations of an open society. Its Constitution in fact includes a specific reference to it being a “democratic and open society.”

An essential ingredient of that kind of democratic and open society to which our Constitution refers is a constant vigilance

on the part of all to ensure that practice does not erode good intentions. We ourselves, while still in government, often made the point that public organs like the media are essential for the defense and consolidation of our democracy as it holds out the mirror in which those elected to rule on behalf of the people could see themselves. The practice of criticism is not only functionally necessary for the maintenance of an open society, but is an expression of an open society. What we are saying is that even in the improbable event of there being nothing wrong to be criticized, an open society would as an essential element of that openness continue to experience criticism.

The manner in which South Africans have managed their transition is often hailed as a miracle. The world stands astounded and admiring at the way in which the people of our country have come together across historical divides to first resolve our political conflicts, and then to start rebuilding society. Yet, we remain a divided society, not necessarily in racial terms, but more crucially between the rich and the poor. We are still one of the countries with the highest coefficients indicating

the difference between rich and poor. And that exists while systemic and massive poverty is one of the most dangerous ene-

predict outcomes, and the danger of unintended consequences lurks in even the simplest of human actions; it can certainly not

Even in the improbable event of there being nothing wrong to be criticized, an open society would as an essential element of that openness continue to experience criticism.

mies of democracy and the open society.

One of the major challenges we face, in this context of a discussion on the nature of an open society, is to balance and marry the insistence on and foregrounding of liberal freedoms with an equally insistent campaigning for substantive social justice. The chapter on the founding provisions in our Constitution opens with a reference to the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. If our Constitution is in fact the embodiment of what we wish for our society, then we are enjoined by this phrase to attend equally to the realization of each of those values and goals.

It is in this context that we wish to return to the concept of an all-embracing partnership. We have arrived at where we are as a people and a nation, because of a partnership expressed in a historic compromise between forces that were locked in a combat that could only have led to the destruction of our common country. We were able to mobilize a national partnership of forces against apartheid. We started off our democracy in a government of national unity, combining in partnership political parties that had been sworn enemies, thus ensuring stability in those founding years. We are once more calling upon such national partnerships to develop and rebuild our country.

In a country that has in its recent history experienced such a total strategy of national mobilization, a deep-seated suspicion is understandable. It is easy to portray the call for partnership—and for a new patriotism, as we have often articulated—as a move towards closure of spaces of difference and dissent, as illiberal centralization, as a thrust towards homogenization. In human affairs one can never absolutely

be ruled out in this case either. We do need, however, to free ourselves from the imprisonment of continuing to equate the national conditions under our present constitution with those of apartheid. Patriotic partnership must surely mean something substantively different under the changed circumstances.

There are many perspectives from which to describe and typify South African society. What I wish to highlight in this context is the coexistence, the spatial and social juxtaposition, of two contradictory phenomena. On the one hand, there is this massive poverty to which we have already referred. Adjacent to it is a relatively sophisticated and advanced intellectual infrastructure and culture. Our university

NGO REGISTERED

Our World Gay and Lesbian Center, an organization dedicated to the protection of human rights and the improvement of society's attitudes toward homosexuality and gay identity in Lugansk, Ukraine, was registered as a nongovernmental organization in November. The Center is the first openly gay and lesbian organization in Ukraine to be registered.

In the Fall 1999 *Open Society News* Viewpoint, Center coordinator Andriy Maymulakhin argued that despite a hopeful start when his country gained independence, discrimination against gays and lesbians—and the unwillingness of the government to register his organization—remained a problem in Ukraine.

AP/Wide World Photos



Nelson Mandela

system and scientific community have a solid base to them; the vibrancy of our nongovernmental and civic society was a key element in sustaining progressive and modern-minded resistance to apartheid; the artistic and literary community has maintained its creativity and vitality; our press is aggressively independent and free.

The eradication of poverty must be the overall national priority. A democratic government has been voted into office with the mandate to deliver a better life for all. That simply and unequivocally means the mobilization of all possible energies for poverty alleviation and eradication.

At the same time and on a different level, South Africa needs to nurture that intellectual infrastructure. Not only is the nurturing and improvement thereof imperative for the provision of the human resources to address our developmental needs; that intellectual infrastructure provides the basis for sustaining ourselves as a modern democracy, as an open society where civil liberties are cherished, protected, and promoted.

This again emphasizes the need for constructive and creative partnership. The submersion of all intellectual activity in the unmediated utilitarian task of poverty alleviation will impoverish and ultimately destroy that infrastructure and culture. The conduct of a high-minded intellectual life without reference to or concern for the massive sea of poverty surrounding it

We do need...to free ourselves from the imprisonment of continuing to equate the national conditions under our present constitution with those of apartheid.

would be a form of decadence that will also eventually cripple and destroy meaningful intellectual life.

It is often remarked that social sectors such as university-based intellectuals, the churches, the NGO world, and others have become noticeable for their relative absence and silence on the large national debates. Much of the media have made a fetish of sounding critical so that their voices become predictable and wont to be ignored. This is in marked contrast to the situation under apartheid when democracy



Photo by James Nubile

Children in post-apartheid South Africa, like these in the township of Mamelodi, suffer from a lack of basic necessities.

and resistance found its voice most resonantly in these sectors.

Is part of the explanation of that not again to be found in the difficulty of making that fundamental mind shift about the nature of government? It is also sometimes suggested that some of the historically

Afrikaans universities have made faster and more progress in adapting to the changed political circumstances. If this were to be true, does it not point to the fact that they have greater experience—negative as it might have been in the past—of constructively cooperating with governments? We can certainly not be calling for that uncritical acquiescence that characterized the relationship between the former regime and some sectors of society; but the instinctive withdrawal from, or reticence about, partnership with govern-

ment in our present circumstances is to the benefit of no one.

My basic argument has been for a broad national partnership for the reconstruction and development of our society. This process must lead to substantive improvements in the material conditions of the poor. It must ensure that we live in a society where fundamental freedoms and rights are respected and protected. That is what we struggled for as a nation and a people—not the one at the expense of the other. We should take great care that none of us conduct ourselves in such a manner that any of these rubrics come to be seen as the terrain of only certain sectors of society. For civil liberties to be perceived or projected as the concern of, for example, the historically advantaged, and for issues of substantive social justice the concerns of the previously disadvantaged, divides our society once more.

Let us join forces once more to ensure that the democratic and open society our Constitution speaks of is solidly built and sustained. 📌

Crossing Bibliographical Borders



Natalia Zbarovskaya knows a lot about libraries. For thirteen years, she has worked in St. Petersburg's public library system, and is now the manager of the youth section at the Nyevisky district branch. She has written for several journals on the use of educational games and technology in libraries. In 1998, she completed her Ph.D. in library science at the prestigious University of Culture in St. Petersburg, and defended her dissertation on the development of reading culture in public libraries.

Until six months ago, however, Zbarovskaya had little practical experience with libraries outside of Russia. But last July, as one of 15 of OSI's 1999 Library Program fellows, she received the opportunity to work alongside her American peers at the Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL) in New York.

During her six-month fellowship, Zbarovskaya developed an understanding of QBPL's methods in collection development, technical services, library automation, bibliographic standards, and electronic cataloging. She also made site visits to schools in New York, helping to increase awareness among students about the availability of bibliographic resources. Zbarovskaya helped QBPL reach the local Russian community by contributing to its Russian-language website.

With work experience in both St. Petersburg and Queens, Zbarovskaya is able to compare and contrast the two library systems. Generally, she feels, they are similar, and have much to learn from each other.

"Public libraries in St. Petersburg offer free and equal access to informa-

OSI's Library Program brings library and information professionals from Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to U.S. and Western European libraries. These fellowships are designed to increase professional skills and strategies that may be shared with colleagues after returning home. For further information about these opportunities, please visit www.osi.hu/nlp/index.html.

tion, just as QBPL does," she explained. "However, in St. Petersburg, the public libraries are primarily informational and academic. Queens Borough public libraries, while often used for research, seem to place more importance on becoming a place for relaxation and recreation."

Zbarovskaya returned to St. Petersburg in December, where she hopes to publish a comparison of the two systems, and incorporate her new expertise into lectures at the University of Culture's School of Library Science.

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