

**Global Feminisms
Comparative Case Studies of
Women's Activism and Scholarship**

RUSSIA

Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva

Interviewed by Natal'ia Pushkareva

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Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva, born in 1957, is a Doctor of Economics, currently working as a senior researcher at the Institute of Social Economic Studies of the Population at the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISESP RAS)¹. In the 1980s, she graduated from the Department of Economics of Moscow State University, gained experience as an applied sociologist, and in 1984 she defended her Candidate's Dissertation on "The Social Effectiveness of Women's Professional Work: Experience of Comparative Analysis of International and Regional Research." She cofounded the Moscow Center of Gender Research in 1990. The goal of the center was to conduct gender research on essential social issues and gender analysis for social projects and potential legislation, and provide assistance in overcoming gender discrimination in all spheres of society. In 1999, she defended her doctoral dissertation on the "Interconnection of Socio-economic Processes and Gender Relations" and was awarded a degree of Doctor of Economics. At the present time, she works in the rectorate of the Russian State University of the Friendship of the Peoples and at ISESP RAS. Her professional interests include gender economics and gender and family sociology. Her most important publications include: *Gender Kaleidoscope: Lecture Courses* (Moscow: Academia, 2001); *Methodological Approaches to Labor Migration from CIS Countries to Russia: Gender Aspect* (2008). She has edited collections, including *Modern Patriarchy: A Socio-economic Essay* (Moscow: Academia, 2001); *Economic and Social Policy: The Gender Dimension*. (Moscow: Academia, 2002).

Natal'ia L'vovna Pushkareva is currently a professor, chief research fellow, and the Director of the Women's and Gender Studies Department at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her fields of interest include gender history, history of family relations, the social anthropology of the academic community, as well as the history of sexuality in medieval, modern, and contemporary Russia. The chief editor of the yearbook *Sotsial'naiia istoriia (Social History)*, she also serves as president of the Russian Association for Research in Women's History. From 1981 to 2016, she has edited more than thirty essay collections, published dozens of articles for both academic and non-academic magazines, and written dictionary and encyclopedia entries as well as monographs. Pushkareva is considered to be a principal founder of the field of women's studies in Russia.

The Global Feminisms Project is a collaborative international oral history project that examines feminist activism, women's movements, and academic women's studies in sites around the world. Housed at the University of Michigan, the project was started in 2002 with a grant from the Rackham Graduate School. The virtual archive includes interviews

¹ Fully named The Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of the Russian Academy of Sciences and sometimes known as the Institute of Social Economics Problems of the Population. ISEP RAS's main focus is conducting scientific research in the field of socio-economic issues within populations, and was established in 1988 (Our Institute, <http://www.isesp-ras.ru/en/>, 10/17/2019)

from women activists and scholars from Brazil, China, India, Nicaragua, Poland, and the United States.

Our collaborator in Russia is Dr. Natalia L. Pushkareva, who gathered a diverse group of feminist scholar-activists and colleagues for the Russia portion of the Global Feminisms Project and conducted the majority of the interviews. Our work in Russia was supported by a Collaborative Planning Grant from University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

Keywords: academia, research, funding, government, internet

Natalia Pushkareva: Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva, doctor of economics, lead researcher at the Institute of Social Economic Problems of the Population under the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow². Marina Mikhailovna, tell us about your life's path, about your biography. How do you imagine your life and the point, the juncture where you find yourself now? Tell us about yourself.

Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva: To be honest, this is a difficult question for me, and the older I get, the more difficult it gets. Because, due to a variety of circumstances, I became interested in psychological literature, and I understand that the way a person's path develops is closely tied to a series of brain processes that take place.

Now it is as if I see myself from the outside, and I can illustrate this for you. At times, all of us relax outdoors: we plant flowers, work in our yard. I always found myself funny because I could never finish any one thing. I would begin planting flowers, then suddenly run to the cucumber beds, then I'd be drawn to the tomatoes, then I would forget about all of that and begin doing something by the stream, and so on. My whole life is pretty much just like that. I was interested in a lot of different topics – all of them related, of course, to the issues of gender, but they have been so different that I could never explain to myself the logic that guides me. There wasn't any. I never had any central stem onto which I could string everything. I probably always walked along some sort of a periphery, around a center that I moved toward but probably never reached.

NP: Tell us about how you defended your doctoral dissertation, about the subject of your study at the start of your academic journey and later on, how these topics materialized, and why you were fascinated by them.

MM: Of course, before my Doctor of Sciences³ dissertation, there was my Candidate of Sciences⁴ work; it was also directly concerned with questions of gender.

NP: Also gender? So somehow you developed an interest in the study of gender economics and the research for which you are known in scholarly circles?

² Fully named The Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population of the Russian Academy of Sciences and sometimes known as the Institute of Social Economics Problems of the Population. ISEP RAS's main focus is conducting scientific research in the field of socio-economic issues within populations; it was established in 1988 (Our Institute, <http://www.isesp-ras.ru/en/>, 10/17/2019)

³ The highest doctoral degree academics could earn in the USSR. It is of equivalent or sometimes higher prestige than a PhD. (Wikipedia Doctor of Science, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_of_Science, October 17/2019)

⁴ The second highest doctoral degree in the USSR, just below a Doctor of Science. (Wikipedia Candidate of Science, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candidate_of_Sciences, 10/17/2019)

MM: When I worked at the Institute of Sociology⁵, there was a major project under way, called “The Lifestyle of the Soviet People.”⁶ It was led by Professor Ivan Tikhonovich Levykin⁷, and they offered me to conduct an analysis of a huge database sorted by gender.

NP: What year was this?

MM: ...I think around 1982-1983. I began working on the analysis and realized that it was a boundless topic, that there was so much I could see and find there, that I was really fascinated by it. And once I began working on this topic, I kept working on it all my life. Different aspects of it, of course, as I’ve already mentioned. For the most part, it had to do with questions of labor, employment of women, and my candidate’s thesis had to do precisely with the professional employment of women; it was a secondary analysis of Russian and foreign studies. In other words, practically the entire dissertation was based on an analysis of the literature, including the foreign literature, that had to do with female employment. My work was called “The Social Effectiveness of Professional Female Labor.”⁸

NP: What was the reaction to these kinds of topics, these kinds of studies, in your circles, in academic circles, in the years when you were working on your candidate’s and doctoral dissertations, the 1980s and ’90s?

MM: There was already a great number of interesting studies, a whole pleiad of sociologists whose work I could draw on. I remember enjoying the works of Gruzdeva and Chertikhina.⁹ They were published a lot, they had wonderful articles, not only scholarly, but also

⁵ The Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISRAS) was founded in 1968 and became a research institute committed to studying society scientifically, and to providing realistic advice for the general Russian public. (Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, <https://www.isras.org>, 10/17/19)

⁶ This extensive study of the lives of Soviet people in 27 towns was conducted under the leadership of Ivan Levykin from 1980-1981. (Matthews, *Patterns of Deprivation in the Soviet Union Under Brezhnev and Gorbachev*, Hoover Institution Press, 1989).

⁷ A professor of Sociology who died in 1994 and published multiple works, including *Some Methodological Problems in Studying the Psychology of the Peasantry*. He was also the head of the project “The Lifestyle of the Soviet People” aka “The Condition and Basic Tendencies for the Development of a Socialist Way of Life”. (ЛЕВЫКИН Иван Тихонович, https://www.isras.ru/pers_about.html?id=557, 10/29/19)

⁸ A study by Marina Malysheva that analyzes the relationship of socio-economic processes such as the interaction between social and economic factors (like how a person’s class is determined by their income) and gender relations. (Electronic Library of Dissertations, <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=ru&u=https://www.dissercat.com/content/vzaimosvyaz-sotsialno-ekonomicheskikh-protsessov-i-gendernykh-otnoshenii&prev=search>, 10/28/19)

⁹ Authors of many well known articles and publications about a variety of issues women faced in the USSR. They wrote “The Occupational Status and Wages of Women in the USSR”. (The occupational status and wages of women in the USSR, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12280861>, 10/31/19)

journalistic, that were discussed enthusiastically and widely. There was a lot written about family sociology, strange as it may seem, specifically about the sociology of labor. But this makes sense, since Russian women, as they said, had universal employment, so we had to keep raising the question of how to combine professional work with family life effectively. I read articles and book written by Iankova¹⁰, Matskovskii¹¹, Kharchev¹² – these are all very well-known names. So that’s basically how I started. Everything new that I brought into my work had to do with translating mostly English-language literature, because I primarily worked with English. But I was lucky because in 1990—1988, actually—I went abroad for the first time, to France, and, oddly enough, we had a colloquium about youth, which, of course, dealt with much broader topics. It was then that I found out about Andree Michel,¹³ who wrote interesting articles about feminism and also led campaigns against militarism. Her writings made a very strong impression on me, even though I did not study or write about this particular topic; still, they were the push that made me look specifically into literature on feminism.

NP: What years... What years did this happen in?

MM: This was right in 1988 when I went to Europe, and then in 1990 I was offered an internship in the United Kingdom. I went to Guildford College, right next to London – I think about 30 km. After Guildford, I was given the opportunity to go to Bradford University, and then I was in Birmingham at that time. It was a two-month trip. And then I was in Warwick.¹⁴

¹⁰ Zoia Alekseevna Iankova has a PhD in History and was the Deputy Head of the Family Sector of the Institute for Sociological Research of the USSR Academy of Sciences. She’s published many works on gender, women, and family, including *The Urban Family* (1979) and *The Soviet Woman: A Social Portrait* (1978). (От Домостроя к паритету, <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/461/17.htm>, 10/31/19)

¹¹ Mikhail Semenovich Matskovskii was a professor and researcher with his PhD. He published several books about marriage and family, including *The Modern Family & its Problems* in 1978. (Mikhail Semenovich Matskovskii, https://www.isras.ru/pers_about.html?id=468, 10/31/19)

¹² Anatolii Grigorievich Kharchev was a Russian sociologist who lived from 1921 to 1987. (Kharchev, Anatolii Grigorievich, https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Харчев,_Анатолий_Георгиевич, 10/31/19)

¹³ Andree Michel (1920-) is a French sociologist, feminism, anti-colonialist, and antimilitarist. She published extensively on women’s work in the 1970s and 80s, writing in French. (In French: Andree Michel, <https://www.babelio.com/auteur/Andree-Michel/112666>, accessed August 2017).

¹⁴ The original translator of the interview appended MM’s account with several notes. That version of the text reads: “I was given the opportunity to go to Bradford University, where Susan Bridger was working then, and then to the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Birmingham. There I met Melanie Ilic and Hilary Pilkington. Then I was at Warwick University, where I met Annie Phizacklea. The trip lasted two months. The end result was the appearance of my article in a collective monograph edited by Annie Phizacklea and published by Routledge, *Women in the Face of Change*. Susan (Sue) Bridger published on women and Eastern Europe (“Bridger, Susan.” [WorldCat Identities]. January 01, 1987. Accessed February 23, 2018. <http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n86057986/>.)

NP: And these impressions from scholarly life and the quality of research that existed in France and England at that time – they had an effect on your conclusions and topics, and the questions you were asking when you were writing your own work here in Russia?

MM: Of course, needless to say. When I started... You have to understand what the 1980s were like in Russia. The word “discrimination” did not even exist. But when I began exploring English scholarship, “segregation” and “discrimination” were at the center of attention, of course. And, if I was going to seriously analyze our reality – I understood that all of that was directly tied to our life, that these things were also happening here, and that we have to conduct a very serious analysis of them. And I gradually started writing about this. And then there was a whole series of trips to Germany, one of which was a complete shock. It was a meeting with the German journalist Christa Wichterich¹⁵, who wrote the monograph *The Globalized Woman*.¹⁶ She described the issues of discrimination and segregation of women on a global scale exceptionally well. Later she invited me to a seminar called “Unpaid Woman’s Work,” which referred to what is known as “care work” or “unpaid work.”¹⁷ It was about the future of unpaid work. We were all asked to imagine how humanity would be affected by unpaid labor.¹⁸ And this seminar, the colloquium elsewhere, and my acquaintance with the work of European scholars all nudged me toward my doctoral work. Basically my entire previous research sphere took shape.

Melanie Ilic is a Professor of Soviet History at the University of Gloucestershire and a research fellow who focuses on women’s history and Eastern European Studies. (Melanie Ilic, <https://historyglos.com/staff-profiles/melanie-ilic/>, accessed August 2017).

Hilary Pilkington is a professor of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester. (Biography, <https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/hilary.pilkington.html>, accessed August 2017).

Anne-Marie Phizacklea is a professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick. (Anne-Marie Phizacklea, <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/phizacklea/>, accessed August 2017).

Women in the Face of Change: The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China, edited by Shirin Rai, Hilary Pilkington and Annie Phizacklea, Routledge, 1992.

¹⁵ Christa Wichterrich is a German journalist who published the book *The Globalized Woman: Reports for a Future of Inequality* in 1998. Her book discusses how globalization is connected to underpaid women. (Christa Wichterich, Zed Books, <https://www.zedbooks.net/shop/book/the-globalized-woman/>, 10/17/19)

¹⁶ *The Globalized Woman: Reports from a Future of Inequality*, Christa Wichterich, Zed Books, 2000.

¹⁷ The original translator notes that the seminar “Unpaid Woman’s Work” was held in Bonn in 1998. Unpaid work is non-market work that receives no compensation. It includes housework, family care, growing food that won’t be sold, and collecting other essentials like water, wood, etc. (Swiebel, Joke, Unpaid Work and Policy-Making Towards a Broader Perspective of Work and Employment, <https://www.un.org/esa/esa99dp4.pdf>, 10/19/17)

¹⁸ The original translator further specified the text here: “It was about the future of unpaid work, about how it relates to migrant labor and gender stratification of society. We were all asked to imagine how humanity would be affected by the curbing of social programs, the liberalization of the economy, and the growth of unpaid labor.”

NP: And, consequently, your doctoral dissertation focused on this issue of discrimination, of gender asymmetry in the labor market?

MM: Yes, the exploitation of women in the labor market and gender economics were in some form included in my dissertation. For the most part, my dissertation was focused on unpaid female work, and the central concept was that of reproductive labor. Not in the sense of human social reproduction in a demographic understanding, but rather human social reproduction and the place of women in reproductive labor in general because of course, all reproductive labor was done by women, which continues even now.¹⁹

NP: This raises a question: can you agree with the statement that this type of research serves the feminist idea and in general contributes to the growth and development of women's movement in the country?

MM: Probably, yes. But, of course, it is a very difficult question.

NP: How do you yourself define the term "feminism"?

MM: It's good that we are going to specify that, because it is very difficult to define what "women's movement" and "feminism" mean. Probably it's difficult to give one a definition because it means the you can't give the other a definition and vice versa. As concerns the term "feminism"... Well, my first trip, which was to Warwick University and to Birmingham University, involved a meeting with several famous British feminists of the time. Among them were Hilary Pilkington²⁰ – her name is probably well known. And Phizacklea²¹. And many others. And I tried then to think through everything they told me at this time in the 90s, the early 90s. They gave me books. I read about various waves of feminism and I read the discussions regarding that there is no such thing as feminism in the singular, but rather "feminisms." And there are a lot of them. Some might focus on the problem of motherhood; it turns out that that is one feminism. While another might take up a completely radical position and that's really... No, not so much a critique of masculinity, but more a resistance, a powerful resistance to men.²² In other words, feminism is so varied, so multifaceted, that I

¹⁹ The original translator further specified what MM means here: "Not in a demographic sense—human reproduction was examined through the prism of the overexploitation of women in the performance of everyday services and care for children, the elderly, and the disabled. This overexploitation continues to this day."

²⁰ Pilkington is a published and award-winning Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester and Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences. (The University of Manchester, [https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/hilary-pilkington\(0574e3e6-d2c5-42dd-a072-4cc62bc85be6\).html](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/en/researchers/hilary-pilkington(0574e3e6-d2c5-42dd-a072-4cc62bc85be6).html), 10/22/19)

²¹ Annie Phizacklea is a published author who wrote "Migration and Globalization: A Feminist Perspective"; the rest of her publications focus on racism, gender, and class. (Springer Link, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-26258-8_2, 10/22/19)

²² The original translator replaced this section of the text beginning with "Probably it's difficult to give..." with the following: "It's difficult to give a single definition. The concept of "feminism" specifically was at the center of discussion during my first trip to Bradford, Birmingham, and Warwick universities. Many British feminists were having these discussions at the time. I received various articles and books about this, and I was trying to

don't think I would attempt to give a general definition, nor do I think anyone could. There is probably no point in trying.

NP: Have you worked with a women's organization, here in Moscow, or elsewhere in Russia? To what extent can we say... Does it still exist, and was your research in any way connected to the work it was doing?

MM: The first organization I worked at was the Moscow Center for Gender Studies.²³

NP: When was it founded?

MM: It was created in 1993, or maybe it was 1992—I started there a bit later. The center had already existed for at least a year by then. It was headed by the famed Anastasiia Posadskaia,²⁴ a very charismatic, incredibly interesting person. She could bring everyone together, get us excited; she had amazing energy. I think energy is the main thing for uniting people. When you feel it, you switch on, you ignite, like a lightbulb. When a person only has an intellect but no energy, it's not enough. But she had everything.

NP: What were the goals of this organization?

MM: Its goal, firstly – well, I don't have to think up anything because it was right in the name: "Gender Awareness," so its goal was the formation of a gender consciousness, to give people "gender lenses," so that they would learn to see the world through these optics.²⁵ We worked as hard as we could. Of course, we were a small group, around eight or nine

make sense of it all. I learned about the different feminist waves, and how there is no single "feminism" concept, and that it often combines contradictory notions. One person might focus on the issues of motherhood and ways of female self-expression through child rearing—turns out this, too, is feminism. Another person can take up a completely radical position and consider the family a conservative and outdated institution, not only criticizing masculinity but even seeing male aggression and conflict of the sexes in everything."

²³ The Moscow Center for Gender Studies was a non-governmental, non-profit center for feminist research in Russia. A few of our interviewees from Russia have worked with the Moscow Center for Gender Studies, such as Yelena Kochkina, Marina Malisheva, Olga Voronina. (Moscow Center for Gender Studies. Accessed February 18, 2018. <http://www.owl.ru/eng/women/aiwo/mcgi.htm>.)

²⁴ Anastasiia Posadskaia is a Russian activist who has been directly involved in the women's movement in the USSR. She is one of the founders of the LOTOS (Liberation from Social Stereotypes) group and helped create the Centre for Gender Studies in the USSR. Along with Natalya Zakharova and Natalya Rimachevskaya, she wrote an article detailing the "subordination of women in the USSR". (Molyneux, Maxine, and Anastasya Posadskaya. "Interview with Anastasya Posadskaya (25 September 1990)." *Feminist Review*, no. 39 (1991): 133-40. doi:10.2307/1395449.)

²⁵ The original translator restated this section of the text beginning with "Its goal..." with the following: "Its goal was to shape society's gender thinking. One of our major projects was even called 'Raising Gender Awareness.' In other words, we wanted to give people 'gender lenses' so that they would learn to see the world through these optics."

people, I think. Others often joined in—it was a large kind of hangout—²⁶ but the core wasn't very big, considering the scale of our country. Posandskaia managed to have frequent seminar.

NP: For whom?

MM: To our seminars we invited, firstly, our academic public, as well as university professors from various regions of Russia and various non-profits, small organizations, which were appearing in the 1990s in Russia.

NP: So the “gender lenses” were intended, first of all, for scholars, researchers, professors.

MM: Absolutely.

NP: And, probably, for activists of some grassroots organizations?

MM: Yes, exactly. That's exactly how it was. And, naturally, as much as the foundations gave us grants—and for the foundations it was very important that our politics—well, they always said, “whether you want to do politics or you're apolitical, it doesn't matter”—but I believe that, yes, “gender politics,” “gender politics” was both the political and the apolitical. The most important thing for the foundations and ourselves was that these issues be presented on a higher level. That is, that they be integrated into various institutional structures.²⁷ So we naturally went to the Moscow City Duma²⁸ and the State Duma.²⁹ We had bureaucrats and legislators that talked with us and came to our events. We conveyed to them our ideas, our concerns. We invited them to our seminars, conferences, as much as possible. But in the end many disappointments awaited us.

NP: Why?

MM: Because, well, because of our naivete. When I started this work, I was convinced that if we have more women in politics, there will be more gender equality. I don't think that

²⁶ The original translator restated this section of the text beginning with “Others often joined...” and ending with the footnote with the following: “Others often joined our seminars and conferences and visited the library of the MCGS. We got hundreds of people involved.”

²⁷ The original translator restated the text beginning with “Exactly” up to the footnote with the following: “Our projects received grants from foundations in France, Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, and the US, and it was very important to them that the politics of gender equality be represented also on a high level, that they be integrated into the various institutional structures of the government.”

²⁸ The Moscow City Duma in Moscow is the Russian regional parliament of the city. It is made up of 35 elected members, and its legislation can only be overridden by the mayor and the federal government. (<https://duma.mos.ru/en/>, accessed August 2017).

²⁹ The State Duma is a part of the Federal Assembly of Russia in charge of legislature and personnel. (The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, <http://www.politika.su/e/fs/gd.html>, accessed August 2017).

anymore. It didn't work because there are real examples of women for whom questions of gender equality became peripheral as soon as they entered politics.

NP: What can be done—and is it even possible to imagine—what can be done to bring together the work of centers like the Moscow Center for Gender Studies and activists working with grassroots organizations? What can be done to ensure that the type of work that was being done in the 1990s continues even now? Does this depend on funding, on Western grants that are no longer there?³⁰

MM: Of course, it depends on the grants. It would be good if they were Russian, it would be really great. But we ended up in a situation where there are almost no Russian grants and the Western ones are criticized. It's as they say, "if you want it that way, then live with it." It's not possible anywhere, in any country, for grassroots organizations to function without grants. It's a serious problem. In this respect, I had a unique experience at the International Republican Institute³¹. And because I work there...

NP: Say a little more about that, because not everyone knows about the International Republican Institute.

MM: It's a funny story because literally a month ago I began corresponding with an American colleague, with whom I collaborated in 1995 on a project that studied changes in the behavior of Russian families. We published a book together, *A Window into Russian Private Life*, was published.³² I wrote her that after we finished the project, I began working for the International Republican Institute, and she asked me what that was. This took me by surprise because she's an American, and I was sure she definitely knew about it. She asked me: "Does it have something to do with the Republicans?" I told her, "Of course it does." We had then the IRI and the NDI³³. The NDI was with the Democratic Party and the

³⁰ Western countries provided funds to Russia in the post-Soviet period after 1992, in an attempt to promote democratic and free-market institutions. (Menges, Constantine C. "An Initial Assessment of U.S. Aid to Russia, 1992-1995 And a Strategy for More Effective Assistance." https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/04-04_menges.pdf.)

³¹ The International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nongovernmental, nonpartisan organization whose main goal is to promote and aid the development of democracy in nondemocratic countries by promoting civil involvement in government. This group does not claim to be directly related to the US Republican Party, but many high ranking Republican officials sit on its Board of Directors. (FAQS IRI, <https://www.iri.org/who-we-are/faqs>, 10/22/19)

³² Rimashevskaya, N., D. Vannoj, and M. Malysheva. *A Window into Russian private life. Married couples in 1996*.

³³ The National Democratic Institute is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose main goal is also to promote and aid democracy in countries lacking it by promoting civil involvement and fair government. This group does not claim to be a part of the US Democratic Party, but most of the higher level staff are directly affiliated with the Democratic Party. (WHAT we do/WHO we are, <https://www.ndi.org/what-we-do>, 10/21/19)

IRI – with the Republicans. And these two structures conducted an enormous project in practically all the Russian regions. They ran training programs on participation in electoral campaigns at the municipal level, the regional level, and at the federal level. So they taught people how to work in government and how to shape and further their agenda, in particular the gender-based agenda. Thanks to this institute and their grant, which they gave me, I traveled to many regions in Russia and met with numerous women’s organizations in different cities.

NP: And are you still in touch?

MM: No, but that has more to do with a personal...

NP: Problem?

MM: Situation because if I hadn’t left to work in a university under the Academy of Sciences³⁴, I’m convinced that those contacts would have continued and remained strong. It’s just that I’ve had this inclination in my life. And now through internet correspondences I try to track the lives of these people. Because of these grants, there arose a particular social environment of like-minded people who have their own view of community and how people should interact, how they should defend their values. And what is most interesting is that in recent years, which were a turning point in Russia, these people managed to maintain their position. That concerns gender, but in a much broader and deeper sense. It has to do with human values in general, an understanding of tolerance, an understanding of how to maintain a democratic agenda even in the most difficult circumstances. That’s very important.

NP: So here’s a question: we’ve been talking about the activists, the leadership, the elite of such organizations that you were in contact with, or the knowledge that was brought to the regular educators, scholars, maybe students during the 1990s, when the International Republican Institute was active, along with a number of women’s organizations that no longer exist. are these people still active or not?

MM: They are. Absolutely they are. These people continue working. Maybe they are now doing other things because the atmosphere has turned over and changed so much. But without a doubt, they continue working... They came out of such-and-such school or they support this other school. But those values which they took in, in one way or another, they translate them into action in their educational programs, as well as in their electoral campaigns.³⁵ In truth, it’s very difficult for me to judge right now because I’m so far

³⁴ The Russian Academy of Sciences is the highest-ranking scientific society in Russia and is the main authority on natural and social sciences. They provide direction for higher education institutions. (Academy of Sciences, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Academy-of-Sciences-Russian-organization>, 10/21/19)

³⁵ The original translator restated the text beginning with “Maybe they are...” up to the footnote with the following: “They are hardened, they have a particular resilience and optimism. They are integrated into new socially relevant projects because they went through from the school of leadership, of the movement for human rights, they have mastered the ideas of egalitarianism and they value horizontal connections over

removed from it. But actually it's not such a big part of our society because Russia is a huge country, and this is its elite layer, and it by definition cannot be a mass one.

NP: Another question then: how does one broadcast this knowledge from the academic environment to the broader public? In order to... How can our research and your own research into these issues, the issues, let's say, of gender economics, be brought to those who work in grassroots organizations, who work with the electorate. When we talk about elections... a very apropos topic for us right now, etc. So how do we make sure this knowledge doesn't stay limited to our narrow environment?

MM: Well... the general wisdom is, of course, that we have to continue our educational programs. We've written very many books, I should say, in this time. I am of course very grateful to the Soros Foundation – way more books on gender themes were published with their support than that of any other foundation.³⁶ These books are read and reprinted, though sometimes in a somewhat modified form, of course. Many ideas were taken up, and it's possible that they continue spreading in some modified form – they couldn't just disappear. And besides, a new, somewhat-different generation has come of age, and they have their own school of thought, not ours, but most likely something is happening in society, something is changing, as a result not only of our efforts. The young people pick up all sorts of ideas from the Internet, and they connect these with the ideas we tried to convey. Because...In observing young people, I often see that in some ways they have gone farther than us.

NP: Can we say that in contemporary Russia there is a tendency now towards neopatriarchy,³⁷ towards an interest in traditionalism, and that tendency is broadcast by contemporary media outlets and ideological structures? And consequently, is it possible to resist this tendency, and what can be done by contemporary women's organizations that were created back in the "gender 90s" and are driven by a liberal understanding of the women's movement and women's contribution to society?³⁸

everything else. They make use of their experience, in one way or another, in their educational programs, as well as their electoral campaigns."

³⁶ George Soros, founder of the Open Society Foundations, is one of the world's most notable philanthropists and investors. His organization supports individuals and groups fighting against discrimination and inequality, including many women's rights issues. ("George Soros." Open Society Foundations. Accessed February 14, 2018. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/people/george-soros>.)

³⁷ Neopatriarchy is how patriarchy, a social system that maintains unequal power relations between men and women where women are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed, functions in modern societies. ("Neopatriarchy." Neopatriarchy - Wiktionary. Accessed February 18, 2018. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/neopatriarchy>.)

³⁸ Despite the increased number of women involved in Russian politics after the 1990's, women still face many forms of social and political discrimination. Under Putin's Russia, although the government promotes

MM: It's probably difficult to answer what they can do now. Actually...

NP: But how can we resist, just in short?

MM: Of course, there are... It's very interesting to note that we've been talking about a renaissance of patriarchalism. Rimashevskaja³⁹ has actively—she's the director of the Institute of Economic Studies of Population—frequently used this term when the reforms of the 1990s were described.⁴⁰ Because Russia's entry into the market space was accompanied by the seizure of private companies, large parcels of land. In short, everything that could make a profit was secured by the male elite. Women were pushed out, and then it became very difficult for them to break through the obstacles built at this time because everything masculinized, the entire system of power was masculinized. Yes, there really was a renaissance of patriarchalism. And now there is a new stage, only it's being conducted by way of ideology and propaganda. It's very implacable actually. This stage might be connected with the fact that radical Islamists⁴¹ have become very active in the world, and the ricochet hits Russia, influences people's consciousness and psychology, and in a modified form, their ideology is reproduced.⁴²

more opportunities for women's involvement in politics, this regime often continues perpetuates a patriarchal and misogynistic culture. (Johnson, Janet Elise. "Fast-Tracked or Boxed In? Informal Politics, Gender, and Women's Representation in Putin's Russia." *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 03 (2016): 643-59. doi:10.1017/s1537592716001109.)

³⁹ Professor at Moscow State University and at the Academy of Labor and Social relations. She is also a Doctor of Economics and was head of the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population as well as the Laboratory on Issues of Gender. (Our Institute, <http://www.isesp-ras.ru/en/>, 10/21/19)

⁴⁰ Yegor Gaidar, Prime Minister of Russia in 1992 instituted a series of drastic economic reforms that led to hyperinflation and the privatization of state assets. These severe reforms dramatically impacted the lives of many Russians and forced many into poverty. ("Yegor Gaidar." Wikipedia. February 03, 2018. Accessed February 16, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yegor_Gaidar#Reforms_controversy.)

⁴¹ A broad term used to refer to an extreme form of Islam that opposes democracy, individual rights, and tolerance for other religions and forms of belief. This term is applied to groups that sometimes use violent tactics or acts of terrorism to achieve their goals. (Islamic Extremism, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_extremism#cite_note-Casciani-10-6-2014-1, 10/24/19)

⁴² The original translator restated the text beginning with "the seizure of private companies..." up to the footnote with the following: "the seizure of property by the male elite. Women were pushed out, and then it became very difficult for them to break through the obstacles built through the new market mechanisms. The whole power system and all business were so masculinized that their advent obliterated even kindergartens, and there were lines of thousands waiting to place their child into a preschool. We somehow managed to fix that, but now we see a new renaissance of patriarchalism. It is now in a different stage, qualitatively different, which moves through the ideology and propaganda of conservative values. Here you see the ban on abortions, the ban on sex education, weak opposition to domestic violence, and even the increasing frequency of underage-bride marriages and female genital mutilation. Of course, mass migrations from Islamic countries were bound to influence the situation. Radical Islamists have become very active in the world, and the ricochet hits Russia, influences people's consciousness and psychology, and in a modified form, their ideology is reproduced in the segments of population inclined toward nationalism."

I'd like to bring in our discussions on our latest project that we're doing. It might sound strange, but the project is called "Ecogender."⁴³ The term "ecogender" appeared in 1970. I cannot recall the name of the French scholar who introduced it, but back then it was used to refer not to the ecological but to the social environment that creates the cultural shell in which we live – it constructs our idea of gender in general, establishes specific gender norms, forms institutional prescriptions for the appropriate behavior of women and men. Taken together, these things are like an ecology in which we have to breathe, move, structure our behavior.

Now when we talk about "ecogender," we're talking precisely about ecology⁴⁴. And there's a lot of material about how the behaviors of men and women affect ecology in various ways. But I want to return to the old usage of the term. Because, in fact, in its old meaning "ecogender" is something very relevant today. Because of the activity of radical Islamists, which I've already mentioned, and due to the renaissance of patriarchalism in Russia, we have seen the emergence of, for lack of a better word, "purists" – those who really want gender to be pure. They say: "this is a man, this is a woman, and we don't need any transgenders or homosexuals or anything in between." It's shocking how strong, in terms of ideology and propaganda, the push to separate men and women into their different niches has become. But other parallel processes are taking place. If we look at the Scandinavian countries and, yes, in America this is happening as well, and in a number of other countries too, there is a movement to have fathers take an active role in taking care of small children and be present in the prenatal and early postnatal stages of the child's development. From the traditionalist point of view, this is a complete transgression of gender, a departure from the traditional model of parenting, because the man is entirely immersed into a female sphere.

And in another corner of the internet—I've already forgotten in which country—but in one of the Islamic countries they showed this amazing photograph of the all-female crew of a plane – there wasn't even a male pilot. So that's a complete invasion of the male world. In the Islamic world no less! And so this division of people by gender, which is being conducted artificially through propaganda, well, it just seems senseless to me. This is a temporary wave that will subside soon enough. The old gender roles, they're not coming back, and the human ecological environment, in a social sense, has changed forever.⁴⁵

⁴³ The original translator restated the last sentence with: "But there are also diametrically opposite changes taking place in the world. We see the rise of projects that examine the destruction of ecology and the forces behind this process—might the natural and industrial disasters of our planet also have something to do with the same masculinization of power and the limited opportunities for women to influence decisions in the sphere of environmental protection?"

⁴⁴ A branch of biology that studies how organisms interact with their environment, including other organisms. (Pimm and Smith, 1999)

⁴⁵ The original translator restated this paragraph with the following: "But from the point of view of modern medical progress, due to the active participation of the father in the child's first days, the

NP: Is it accurate to say that research of the kind that you conduct and the very interesting information you just told us will get to a wider audience through mass media outlets and participation in TV projects? What is the connection between your fairly small women's organization that brings researchers together and the women's movement (in the broadest sense of the word) or even women's organizations in the country?

MM: Unfortunately, I don't know anything about the contemporary women's movement. I know that there are new interesting groups, and that in some sense they are more advanced than us, because we were, after all, academics. We worked through education, TV appearances, magazine publications, which were, perhaps, for a broader audience, but still. The women's groups that we see now are not afraid to take to the streets. They set up picket lines, often to protest violence against women, probably more than any other cause. And in this sense, I admire young girls, because the political situation is very tough, and you have to have a special kind of courage to speak out openly in these circumstances. But I honestly have no connection to these groups, this young movement, and I cannot say how to best work with them.

NP: Marina Mikhailovna, the last few questions have to do with your relationships to international women's organizations. Do you know such groups and whether they work... err, are there any connections between the Moscow Center for Gender Studies and similar organizations now? Of course, in the 90s such connections were stronger, there were more active exchanges, while what's happening now... And is it possible to take your organization to the international level or is that possibility now foreclosed because of changes in the political context? That's what I mean.

MM: Well, first of all, the saddest news—I had thought that everyone already knew—the Moscow Center for Gender Studies no longer exists; this channel for the broadcasting of gender equality values, as we understood them, is now closed.

child develops faster physically, psychologically, and cognitively. And the men themselves, those who take part in the birth and care of newborns, value their own lives much more, avoid asocial behaviors, and stay away from drugs and alcoholism.

There are also some other curious progressive changes that have to do with fundamental changes in women's behavior. Thanks to the Internet, the whole world saw the photograph of a plane crew that consisted of women only; there wasn't a single male pilot. And this is from an Islamic country. So a full intrusion of women into a male labor sphere took place, even in the Islamic world. All of this tells us that the artificial separation of the sexes through imposed patriarchy makes no sense. It's a wave that will recede. In any case, gender will never again be what it used to be, and the human ecological environment, in a social sense, will forever become fundamentally different, if it hasn't already."

NP: And what was the reason?

MM: There are many reasons why it closed. One of the main ones has to do with the fact that the majority of its members began actively teaching in universities. It became physically impossible to work as much as we did in prior years in the Center. Because we used to literally live there. Sometimes (when we were organizing major conferences) we slept on the tables in order to be able to arrange everything in time and in the way we wanted. Since we wrote a lot of books, they became known and popular, we were invited to teach at universities, offered senior positions, which demanded our full attention. There were now new duties and a responsibility for others whom we couldn't...

NP: And the younger generation? There wasn't one? There wasn't one in your Center, I mean? So when you left for your new job...

MM: Yes, one of the problems was that there weren't any young people joining the Center. We didn't have anyone to take over and continue our work. That is probably the main reason why the Center closed.

NP: Were there any differences between your work, the work of your Center, the Center for Gender Studies, as well as other similar organizations, and such organizations abroad? Are there any differences in methodology, approaches, aims, goals, or objectives between Russian organizations and foreign ones? What is the nature of these differences, if they exist? Or did our Russian organizations simply copy the activities of Western organizations, without any major differences?

MM: I think that it is outright impossible to copy when it comes to this work, because people are incredible creatures; they are unique. It's never certain what can happen as a result of some synergetic effect when they begin to interact. You can begin with simple copying, but it is extremely difficult to predict the outcome, because there is the internal energy in each of us, this individual will, this interest in life, they produce something incredible. Of course, we had to copy some of what Western organizations were doing, because we did not and could not have feminism as such in our country; the women's movement previously was driven by ideology, under pressure from party structures. So yes, we began by copying, but I think in the end we created completely unique, our own gender centers. I am in awe of Ol'ga

Shnyrova⁴⁶, who works in the Ivanovo Center, and of Iarskaia-Smirnova⁴⁷, who works with many of our women, who managed to do something that maybe wasn't even done in the West. They did it in their own way, it was unique and remarkable work. And it continues, though...

NP: Are there still connections with foreign organizations?

MM: Fortunately, the "Anna" Center⁴⁸, which was founded in the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population at the same as the Center for Gender Studies continues its work. And this center has created a bunch of analogic structures in many of the Russian regions. It worked mainly on campaigns against domestic violence, but the people there have gone farther. They've begun working with men and actively with some men's organizations. Mainly in St. Petersburg⁴⁹ where these men's projects are, many of which are very successful and have been actively integrated into Western organizations, which integrate their methods. They then distribute those methods here. I think that this organization has a lot of potential.⁵⁰

NP: This is a good way to conclude. Do you look to the future with optimism and hope when you think about the women's movement in our country? Or has the political

⁴⁶ Ol'ga Shnyrova works for the Ivanovo Center for Gender Research and published her essay "The Woman Question and the National Question In The Russian Empire: Interconnections Between Central and Borderland Women's Suffrage Organizations During the First Russian Revolution". (*Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women*, <https://books.google.com/books?id=QAOUAgAAQBAI&pg=PT804&lpg=PT804&dq=Ivanovo+Center+russia+feminism&source=bl&ots=oLwfFI9yIL&sig=ACfU3U1MnuKt1b66NCVSiamC3eZqHDPhw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjqh7bk2MblAhUHXa0KHAlrBlgQ6AEwAHoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=Ivanovo%20Center%20russia%20feminism&f=false>, 10/31/19)

⁴⁷ Elena R. Iarskaia-Smirnova is a Professor of Sociology at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia. She has a PhD and a Doctor of Sciences in Sociology of Culture. (Elena R. Iarskaia-Smirnova, <https://www.hse.ru/en/org/persons/4013457>, 10/25/19)

⁴⁸ The "ANNA" Center, or National Center For Prevention Of Violence, is a non-profit, nongovernmental group that began in 1973. Its goal is to help prevent violence against women and to provide assistance for women and children who have experienced abuse. (*Mobilizing Local Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence*, <https://www.mott.org/grants/national-center-for-prevention-of-violence-anna-mobilizing-local-communities-to-prevent-domestic-violence-200800851/>, 10/31/19)

⁴⁹ A major city and cultural center of Russia. It was the Imperial Capital for two centuries before Russia ended its monarchy. (French, et al., <https://www.britannica.com/place/St-Petersburg-Russia>, 10/25/19)

⁵⁰ The original translator restated this paragraph with the following: "As far as I can tell, my colleagues from the professional gender community maintain contact with research centers, universities, and social organizations that are concerned with problems of gender equality. Moreover, these contacts have expanded because in recent years, women's organizations both in the West and in Russia have brought thousands of men into their orbit. Men's organizations in Europe and the United States number in the dozens; we have the largest number in Saint-Petersburg. They have very successful projects related to combating violence against women, to the expansion of a father's role, and I think they have a lot of potential."

context changed so much by comparison with the 90s that there is no point in counting on the accomplishments of our women's organizations in those years, when we were aiming for more integration, more cooperation with Western organizations? We took giant steps then, very quickly. How do we evaluate the current situation?

MM: It's just yet another historical period that we have to get past. It can't go on for too long, I'm certain of that. This temporary backsliding is doomed for failure. Our society won't remain in this state for long. Even if we have another decade of this, it won't destroy those shoots that broke through the earth and produced such interesting fruit. I think we are now in a period of internal rethinking. Yes, we were slowed down. We will think, but then there will be a new upsurge. I am sure of it. Russia is an enormous country, there are so many intellectual, educated, incredibly interesting people. The Internet offers many new books that are unique and interesting, which you could never find with such ease before. Maybe it's because now we really live in a globalized space and the ability to exchange ideas is tens, maybe even hundreds, times faster. Interdisciplinarity of research is now spurring an entirely new way of understanding society and expressing the way that this society lives, which we previously couldn't even imagine. And gender questions are entirely based on interdisciplinarity, it can't be otherwise. That's probably why their study is so interesting and fascinating, and why we keep wanting to do this work.

NP: Thank you very much, Marina Mikhailovna, for your account and your memories.

MM: Thank you, also.