

**Institute for Research on Women and Gender - Ann Arbor (Mass), USA**  
**Global Feminisms Project 2016**

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES (Moscow, Russia)<sup>1</sup>

1. Economist – Marina Mikhailovna Malysheva (b. 1957) – Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor in the Russian University of Friendship of the Peoples, member of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Center for Gender Studies.
2. Pedagogue – Liubov’ Vasil’evna Shtyleva (b. 1956) – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Lead Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Childhood, the Family, and Education at the Russian Academy of Education, founder of the Congress of Women of the Kola Peninsula.
3. Philosopher – Ol’ga Aleksandrovna Voronina (b. 1957) – Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Lead Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences, one of the founders of the Moscow Center for Gender Studies.
4. Sociologist – Elena Rostislavovna Iarskaia-Smirnova (b. 1963) – Doctor of Sociological Sciences, PhD, Assistant Professor at the Moscow Higher School of Economics, Editor of the *Journal of Social Policy Research*, founder of the Center for Social and Gender Policy (Saratov, Russia).
5. Historian, Medievalist, Historian of Law – Marianna Georgievna Murav’eva (b. 1975) – Professor in the Department of Theory and History of Law at the Moscow Higher School of Economics, cofounder of the Russian Association of Scholars of Women’s History.
6. Art Historian – Natal’ia Iur’evna Kamenetskaia (b. 1959) – founder of Russia’s first feminist cultural laboratory of arts research Idioma, research fellow at the Educational and Scientific Center for Informational Educational Projects on Gender, Youth, and Family research and the curator of art exhibitions at the Museum Center of the Russian State Humanities University.
7. Political Scientist – Elena Viktorovna Kochkina (b. 1956) – Candidate of Political Sciences, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Population at the Russian Academy of Sciences, former director of the gender programs of the Russian branch of the Open Society Foundation (Soros Foundation).
8. Ethnologist, Anthropologist – Mariia Grigor’evna Kotovskaia (b. 1952) – Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor at the Russian State Humanities University and the Russian State University of Design and Technologies, Lead Research Fellow in the Sector for Ethnogender Research at the Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, member of the Municipal Council of Moscow, Vice President of the regional public organization Alliance of Women Leaders.
9. Demographer – Natal’ia Mikhailovna Rimashevskaja (b. 1932) – Doctor of Economic Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Director of the Laboratory of Gender Problems at the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Population.

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<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: Natal’ia Pushkareva, the author of this analysis, also gave an interview to Dr. Rebecca Friedman for the Global Feminisms Project along the lines of the interviews she analyzes here. She does not include her own interview in this document. The video, transcript, and translation of her interview can be found alongside the other interviews from the Russian site here: <https://globalfeminisms.umich.edu/en/russia>.

10. Philologist – Mariia Viktorovna Mikhailova (b. 1946) – Esteemed Professor of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, Doctor of Philological Sciences.

## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF INTERVIEWEES

**Profession:** Ten scholarly disciplines in which gender studies have been developed are represented among the interviewees. These include philosophy, sociology, demography, economics, history, art history, political science, ethnology, literary studies. Each of the interviewees was one of the first in Russia to pursue a gender-studies line of inquiry in their respective disciplines.

**Age:** the oldest interviewee (Rimashevskaja) was 84 at the time of the interview (the publication of her 1985 article “How do we solve the women’s question?” and her founding of the Laboratory of Gender Problems in 1988 mark the beginning of Women’s and Gender Studies in Russian scholarship).

The youngest interviewee (Murav’eva) was 41 at the time of her interview (she was one of the cofounders of the Russian Association of Scholars of Women’s History from 2002 to 2008). The majority of the interviewees were born between the years of 1947 and 1964.

**Region of Origin:** The majority (7 interviewees) were Muscovites, born, raised, educated, and working in Moscow.

Three women moved to Moscow later in their lives, having developed their discipline in W&GS in their home region and having been invited to read lectures in Moscow universities and institutes (as a result of their success in all-Russian scholarship competitions).

**Education:** nearly all (except one) interviewees received their education in various institutes and universities (the majority of them in the capital of Moscow). The oldest interviewee studied in Moscow State University at the beginning of the 1950s, while the majority received their education at the end of the 1970s, beginning of the 1980s (and towards the end of the 1980s, beginning of the 1990s; when the concept of gender was being adapted in Russia from Western scholarship, they were in their professional primes of 25 to 35). The youngest interviewee began her education in St. Petersburg in the 1990s.

**Familial Status:** of the ten interviewees, two have never been married, three are widows, three are divorced, and two are currently married. Despite this variety of familial statuses, these women professionals rarely spoke about their husbands and almost never mentioned them specifically with the exception of one interviewee (Iarskaia-Smirnova) who had recently lost her spouse.

**Presence of Children and Their Number:** Only two of the ten interviewees had two or more children or grandchildren. Five interviewees had one child each (one of the interviewees adopted a second son).

Three interviewees had grandchildren.

None of the interviewees mentioned their everyday life, its difficulties or ease in relation to their children.

Having more than two children presumably would have limited the activism or academic lives of these women.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Translator’s note: it should also be noted that since the 1970s, the birthrate for ethnic Russians in the Soviet Union and later in the Russian Federation has been below the population replacement rate, so it is not unusual for ethnic

**Degrees and Titles Earned:** of the ten interviewees one was a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, six had Doctors of Sciences degrees and were, in most cases, full professors, while three were Candidates of Sciences and writing their doctoral dissertations. One interviewee (Kamenetskaia) did not have a degree because she is an artist and art critic.

**Connection with Women's Organizations, Informal Conglomerations, Non-Profits and the Women's Movement in Russia:** the majority (7 interviewees) were connected with some women's organization, had participated in its founding, led it or were its members. These organizations were non-profits and NGOs, such as the Moscow Center for Gender Studies, the Russian Association of Scholars of Women's History, the Congress of Women of the Kola Peninsula, the social movement Women of Moscow, the Center for Social and Gender Policy at the Moscow Higher School of Economics, the feminist cultural laboratory of research on the arts IdiomA, and the feminist almanac Transfiguration.

**Manifestation of Views:** of the ten interviewees, one (the oldest; Rimashevskaja) in the course of her interview unexpectedly stated that she did not see the point in calling herself a feminist ("one can work on topics of gender inequality or gender violence without calling one's self a feminist or using the term 'feminism.' Feminism is political credo, and our research goals are broader than politics"). The remaining nine talked about their feminist inclinations with varying degrees of conviction. The majority of the interviewees did not equate feminism with the women's movement; they assumed that feminism was something more radical and attempted to maintain academic respectability by connecting themselves not with feminism or political activism, but with women's studies.

**Particularities of the Time:** The Russian context that colored the development of the women's movement is present in all ten of the interviews. Many spoke of their interest during the Soviet period in the "women's question." Throughout the existence of the Soviet Union, 1917-1991, the Soviet authorities resolved the "women's question" in their own way. The Soviet century is something of a first period in the all the interviews. The second period—from the mid-1980s to the 2000—is a period of orientation toward Western models of the women's political activism and scholarship and a time when the women's movement in Russia received Western financial assistance from various (particularly American) foundations. This period witnesses two overlapping divides in the women's movement: activists vs. intellectuals and those espousing essentialist (or traditionalist) ideologies vs. those espousing feminist ideologies. The third period is characterized by the banishment of Western foundations from Russia and the condemnation of feminist organizations that operated with the support of those foundations (many of these Russian organizations were closed as a result of being declared "foreign agents" because they had accepted Western funding). This period is also a time in which the Russian government openly supports only those women's organizations, which advocate "a return to cultural

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Russian families to have two or fewer children regardless of whether they are intellectuals. For an analysis of birth rates of ethnic Russians in the Soviet Union, see Barbara A. Anderson and Brian D. Silver, "Growth and Diversity of the Population of the Soviet Union," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 510 (77 155AD): July 1990. For an analysis of birth rates of ethnic Russians in the Russian Federation, see Paul Harrison News BBC UGC and Social, "Russians Debate Declining Birth Rate," January 30, 2018, sec. BBC Trending, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-42873763>.

foundations,” “a strengthening of spiritual ties,” i.e. a traditionalism which emphasizes “women’s natural roles” (motherhood and child-rearing, pronatalism). The overwhelming majority of the interviewees do not have a positive view of the cultural turn in this last period and are nostalgic for the “gender 90s.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Translator’s note: it should be noted that the second and third periods described by Pushkareva are those of Yeltsin and Putin’s presidencies respectively. Boris Yeltsin, the first Russian President, served in that post from 1991 to 1999. His presidency was characterized by consistent engagement with the West, neoliberal market reforms, and economic crises. He resigned from the presidency just prior to the end of his second term in 1999, appointing the, at that time, little-known Vladimir Putin as acting president. Putin’s presidencies (2000-2008 and 2012 to the present) have been noted for increased hostility towards the West, a partial abandonment of neoliberal reform, and an embrace of conservative nationalist ideology and neotraditionalism.

## **Global Feminisms Project as Initiative of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (Ann Arbor, Mass., USA) and its intermediary results in Russia (2015-2016)**

The participation of a Russian contingent in the prestigious scholarly Global Feminisms Project at the Women's Studies Department at the University of Michigan<sup>4</sup> is the result of the work of the project's founding co-directors Abigail Stewart, Jayati Lal and Kristin McGuire (Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA) to conduct cross-cultural comparisons of women's movements. They proposed to discuss this issue and include in the project Wang Zheng of China and Slawomira Walczewska of Poland. Later Rebecca Friedman (Miami, USA) and Natal'ia Pushkareva (Moscow, Russia) joined the project. The initiators of the project were united by a desire to record "a moment": to allow colleagues, old and young, whose careers are tied to women's and gender studies in their countries, a chance to express their opinions about what they have accomplished and what remains to be done. The project is undergirded by a common conviction that the biographies of women feminist scholars, the documentation of their lives, their oral histories are something that can and should be passed along to those who will follow in their footsteps.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Russian Component of the Project: Common Positions and Research Goals**

In Russia, as in each of the country-participants of the project, the work began with the creation of a list of those who could talk about their research and its connection with women's activism. We wanted to find those colleagues and scholars who had long pursued the topic of women and gender in their work and have not lost faith or interest in the topic throughout the course of their professional lives. Another quality we looked for in potential interviewees was an openness and a preparedness to speak about their lives and the results of their endeavors. Among those who have long worked on the topic, there were several who declined to speak on camera about their current status. The reasons for their refusal were various, and we did not inquire further about the motivations for their refusal. Those who agreed to participate turned out to be rather open about their lives and did not live locked away in their offices or departments. All the interviewees were in some way or another at one time connected or continued to be connected to women's organizations and empathized with feminist or near-feminist views in the contemporary women's movement.

We considered an ideal cohort of interviewees to be made up of women of various generations and a diversity of scholarly disciplines in which gender studies have developed in Russia. The ten interviews which we collected in Russia include participants working in the fields of philosophy, sociology, political science, economics, pedagogy, ethnology and anthropology, the history of law, demography, philology, and art history.

As we pursued a comparison of the development of gender studies in various countries, the leaders of the various national teams of the project did not intend to capture the entirety of

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<sup>4</sup> Global Feminisms Comparative Case Studies of Women's Activism and Scholarship, Ann Arbor. [http://www.umich.edu/%7Egblfem/en/transcripts/us/Abdulhadi\\_U\\_E\\_102806.pdf](http://www.umich.edu/%7Egblfem/en/transcripts/us/Abdulhadi_U_E_102806.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Stewart Abigail J., Lal Jayati, McGuire Kristin. Expanding the Archives of Global Feminisms: Narratives of Feminism and Activism // Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society . Summer 2011, Vol. 36 Issue 4. P. 889-914.

the globe and create a typology of feminisms on all continents.<sup>6</sup> Research on this topic and on its national particularities has shown already that the traditional endeavor to identify the individual contribution of a given national women's movement to the "international women's sisterhood"<sup>7</sup> is unpromising. Moreover, the beginning of the 2000s convinced many in Russia that the naïve dreams of transferring the basic theoretical concepts of liberal feminism and its ideals from West to East are, at least in the near future, doomed to failure.<sup>8</sup>

However, all of our interviewees were in agreement with the main idea of the initiators of this project – the fruitfulness and timeliness of the documentation of life histories of scholar-activists. For those scholars of women's history and the women's movement who turn to the topic of comparative feminisms now or in the near future, a database of biographies of women involved in women's and gender studies, placed in their historical and cultural context, is an invaluable well of material for the study of attitudes at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These oral histories, organized ideally for comparison through their address of key themes, can become a key to an understanding of how the idea of gender equality crossed borders and how events in world politics dictated the realization of that transfer and the social behavior of women. In the case of Russia, particularly revealing will be the comparison of two eras, two periods, which were mentioned by each of the interviewees: the "gender 90s" and the 2000s, beginning around 2004, when we can detect a turn from Western values to national, Russian values.

These stories will inform listeners how scholarly activity leads to the need for social and political activism. They will make listeners ponder what they can do for women in their own country and in their own time (however high-flown it might sound in the recording). Because it was precisely scholarly activity, as the transcripts of the interviews demonstrate, that pushed these Russian women to create non-governmental women's organizations, including various alliances of women scholars, for example, Women with University Education (founded in 1990), the Russian Association of Scholars of Women's History (founded in 2002), the Council of Women of Moscow State University (founded in 2007), and the Interregional Public Organization of Women in the Sciences and Education (founded in 1992, the acronym for which is *MOZhNO*, the Russian word for "we can" and thus the acronym is something of an answer to the question "can women in the sciences really not defend their rights?" "We can!").<sup>9</sup>

Did all the interviewees, through their work in women's studies, feel a connection between their scholarly work and the women's movement? Did they see their scholarship in women's studies as relevant to the current social problems of women? At its core, the main goal of this project was to study the intersections between scholarship and social activism.<sup>10</sup> And the women interviewed in the Russian portion of the project all answered in the affirmative to the

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<sup>6</sup> Cerwonka Allaine. Traveling Feminist Thought: Difference and Transculturation in Central and Eastern European Feminism // *Signs*. 2008. 33(4). P. 809–832.

<sup>7</sup> Grewal Inderpal, Kaplan Caren. Introduction. *Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity* // Grewal Inderpal, Kaplan Caren. *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. P. 1-36

<sup>8</sup> Jayati Lal, McGuire Kristin, Stewart Abigail J., Zaborowska Magdalena, Pas Justine M. Recasting Global Feminisms: Toward a Comparative Historical Approach to Women's Activism and Feminist Scholarship // *Feminist Studies*. 2010. 36(1). P. 13–39

<sup>9</sup> Ризниченко Г. И. Ассоциация «Женщины в науке и образовании» (5 лет деятельности) // *Общественные науки и современность*. 2000 (4): 190-196

<sup>10</sup> Cole Elizabeth R., Zakiya T. Luna. Making Coalitions Work: Solidarity across Difference within US Feminism // *Feminist Studies*. 2010. 36(1). P. 71–98.

above questions. Each of them maintained their faith in that fact that scholarship in women's studies can be social force, a trigger.

As concerns the methods of collecting these biographical stories, the Russian team and those interviewed were aware that the project directors' discussions of the methodology arrived at the conclusion that the oral history must maintain its authenticity, its uneditedness, with its pauses, its repetitions, unabridged and without "improvements." These oral histories are to be kept for the future as a collection of contemplations, a stream of consciousness recollection of the path trod or yet to be trod. Because we decided against a strict interview protocol and allowed the interviewer to judge when and how a theme should be addressed, we correspondingly expected independent reflections on the topic of feminism and its role in the life of the interviewee, how she understood it over the years and how she included it in her professional community, how her understanding (or lack of understanding, or refusal to think about the term) of feminism has been reflected in her work, and how she understand feminism now.

However, because we wanted to compare our interviews, the interviewer gently directed interviewees toward needed themes and subjects. Prior to the interview, each participant was told that the discussion would focus on their research (only that which had to do with women's studies) and about feminism. And among the ten interviewees (mostly doctors and professors) we found those who said that they did not see a direct connection between the research they conducted and feminism. Of course, one's definition of feminism (or their refusal to define it or their endeavor to pigeonhole it in a traditionally Soviet fashion, i.e. "feminism is politics, and I am a scholar") is richly informative, not only because it defines the political consciousness of a given individual, but also because it helps define feminism as a theory and political practice in the Russian national context.

### **A Few Preliminary Conclusions from the Results of Analysis of the Interviews**

Even a cursory analysis of the interviews conducted by the Russian team demonstrates that a scholar may consider herself far from feminism, but her research may still serve the local goals of the women's movement and may prove needed to an understanding of women's social activity in its global context. Those who did not wish to associate their work on women with feminism were those women who were, as a rule, of the older generation (over the age of 50). They remember how the "women's question" in the USSR was decided (invariably from above by party resolutions), and thus they formed a deep distrust of all political movements and alliances, seeing in them an encroachment on the autonomy of the individual.

This strict delineation of the activity of women's organizations from feminism is, perhaps, typical for countries in which women's issues were addressed in former second-world states and are state projects (as in North Korea and China). This same dichotomy of women's issues vs. feminism characterizes the relationship to the question of feminism for a number of the interviewees in Russia. In Russia and in the Soviet Union before it, the address of women's issues was never connected with the Western conception of feminism – on the contrary, they were openly opposed to one another by the Soviet establishment. Therefore, the older the interviewee, the more frequently they spoke of "the achievements of the Soviet state" (they didn't always name these, but they included a guarantee of women's equal voting rights, a partial working day, additional time off for mothers, an automatic alimony of 25% from a husband who



left the family – in short, this includes everything that was not valued then, 25 years ago, but has recently become valued now that it has been lost).

Across the interviews, there is an observable division into two groups in the discourse and language of these oral histories and how the interviewees reflected on their contribution to gender studies in their field. One group is clearly oriented towards the West, while the other believes that their efforts must be grounded in the Russian situation. The former group spoke about striving towards “gender equality,” while the latter, following the language of Soviet historiography, used the phrase “equality between men and women” (the formulation found in Marxist literature). The former group was younger, more concrete in their answers, and tended not to reflect for long periods of time. The latter group was older and still remembers their lives under socialism. In the interviews, this latter group attempted to allocate more time to the past, using the interview as a chance to talk about their memories.

Nevertheless, all interviewees critiqued both the Soviet and the current gender order, the latter of which they referred to in their research as “post-Soviet patriarchy” or “neopatriarchy.” These terms are understood as the odd combination of the official ideology (both Soviet and contemporary) of “equality between men and women” (the policy of privileges, family benefits, a developed system of public education for children) with a hostility toward the values of emancipation (this hostility is manifested in the absence of equality of opportunity, the double burden of women who split and continue to split their time between the household and work).

The displacement in the beginning of the 1990s of women from the public sphere and from economic and social activity in the private sphere—which was and still is pursued by the state allegedly at the urging of women themselves, who are supposedly tired of the double burden (genderologists in Russian term this state project the “patriarchal renaissance” or the “new patriarchy”)—was quite obviously one of the factors behind the independent women’s movement in the country. The state women’s organization—the Committee of Soviet Women (1956-1991)<sup>11</sup>—failed to respond to women’s needs. Interviewees largely did not comment on the collapse of the Committee, which was later reformed as the Union of Women of Russia (now under the leadership of Ekaterina Lakhova as a coalition financed by the party of power, United Russia),<sup>12</sup> nor did they notice the grassroots creation of the independent women’s movement. Two interviewees were the exception here because they themselves had participated in the first Independent Women’s Congresses in 1991 and 1992 in Dubna.

All of the interviewees learned about gender studies through Western literature, which revealed an entirely new understanding of women’s experience and the civic position of women, armed readers with a critique not only of “Soviet patriarchy,” but also of the nascent post-Soviet order. While only three of the ten interviewees touched on the first Independent Women’s Congresses of 1991 and 1992, the rest spoke precisely about books, conferences and particularly about the summer gender schools, which operated in Russia in the mid-1990s, and later in Foros (Ukraine). Scholarly literature, post-diploma education, continuing education classes – these were the paths by which the concept of gender and feminist theory became the basis for scholarship directed towards democratic practices and founded on the actual equality of opportunity of men and women. The research of many of the interviewees and their colleagues—this includes Russian sociologists, economists, specialists in social work, pedagogues inspired in the 1990s by the concept of gender—spoke not about the mimicry of Western experiences, but about the constant comparison of paths by which aspirations are realized. The concept of gender was accepted by scholars of the above disciplines in Russia: it was included in textbooks and received support from those who create curricula.

Because the struggle for women’s rights was not the profession of our interviewees in Russia, they mentioned very little about the connections between their work and concrete women’s NGOs and non-profits; however, they all confidently emphasized that they had done quite a bit for the development of gender studies in their disciplines and in some cases, the

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<sup>11</sup> Комитет советских женщин // <http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/275051>

<sup>12</sup> Союз женщин России // [http://wuor.ru/index.php?route=record/blog&blog\\_id=3\\_25](http://wuor.ru/index.php?route=record/blog&blog_id=3_25)

appearance of gender in their discipline was a direct result of their research. Women scholars who developed this new line inquiry strongly believed that they were participants in democratic changes in the country. Thus, according to our interviewees, the development of women's and gender studies in post-Soviet Russia—the appearance of laboratories and centers, special sectors in research institutes, working groups in departments of universities—was a form of the development of the women's movement in the 1990s. The detailed stories and memories of the interviewees allows us to understand that this form of social activity got its start at the end of the 1980s when the first feminist association arose among independent artists. The Feminist Cultural Laboratory of Research on the Arts Idioma operated from 1989 to 1996. Prior to the interview with Natal'ia Kamenetskaia little information about this organization was available publicly. Her and other interviews perform an act of restorative historical justice: the first push towards the appearance of an independent women's movement in Russian was made in Soviet times by artists and art critics.

In 1990 the Laboratory of Gender Research (now called the Laboratory of Gender Problems) was founded in the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Population at the Russian Academy of Sciences, itself founded just two years earlier. According to our sociologist and political scientist interviewees, the laboratory was the result of a joint publication entitled “How do we solve the women's question?” by three women scholars (a sociologist, philosopher, and economist) in the ideological journal *Communist*. From that moment on (it is commonly considered) a new line of inquiry arose in Russian sociology and political science. “We proceed from the fact that the so-called natural division of labor between men and women has a social nature,”<sup>13</sup> declared the authors of the article. With that they called for the creation of a new discipline, the context of which would be the study of social inequality caused by sex. Though the word “gender” was not mentioned in the article, the authors nevertheless spoke about “patriarchal” stereotypes, which generated a seeming naturalness to inequality. By itself this address of the “women's question,” which at that time was considered to have been solved in the mid-1930s, was a social call to action. The authors (one of them is one of our interviewees) openly called for a public discussion and their addressee was all of society, not only the professional community of economists and sociologists.<sup>14</sup> The biographical interviews here therefore allow us to create a chronology: after the first sparks (IdimoA and the Moscow Center for Gender Research), which were founded at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, we see groups interested in women's studies form in a number of scholarly institutions. Such group formed among historians as well. The N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences was the first to respond to this new branch of scholarship. In 1992 the Group of Ethnogender Studies was created at the Institute and in 1997 it received the status of a special sector within the Institute. That Institute was well-suited to the group because well before the institutionalization of gender studies, women scholars at the Institute began studying gender issues in their own discipline in the 1970s and 1980s.

Historians, philologists, and art historians at the start of the 1980s, even before the turn towards the topic of women by sociologists and economists mentioned above, actively published the results of their research on what would later come to be known as women's studies. At that time, they published monographs on the history of women's literature, women's daily life, the struggle of women for access to higher education. And, of course, even

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<sup>13</sup> Посадская А. И., Римашевская Н. М., Захарова Н. К. Как мы решаем женский вопрос // Коммунист. 1989. № 4. С. 56-65.

<sup>14</sup> Здравомыслова О.М. Гендерные исследования как опыт публичной социологии в России // Полит.ру. 24.09.2009 <http://polit.ru/article/2009/09/24/gender/>

before that there were many publications on the history of women's participation in the struggle for emancipation. But we must list one caveat: the history of Russian liberal feminism is a topic that was not explored until the beginning of the 1990s, a time which permitted closer associations between Russian and Western scholarship. This subject appeared thanks to the opening of the special holdings of libraries (the books of feminist authors, before perestroika, were not available to ordinary readers because they postulated the existence of a separate women's identity or particular experience, a particular female system of values, and suggested that the "women's question" could be solved not by way of bringing more women into social production as Marxist theoreticians maintained).

Renewed interest in the topic of women and the influence on it of feminist theory became possible with the appearance in Russia of access to Western literature.

In 1996 the Ivanovo Center for Gender Research was created as an academic division of Ivanovo State University as a result of the interuniversity scientific-research program Women of Russia: Problems of Adaptation in New Socioeconomic Conditions). In 1999 the Tver' Center for Women's History and Gender Research was founded. Academic and university centers for gender research of the 1990s did not limit themselves to scholarly inquiry. They sought to combine scholarship with educational projects directed towards the rehabilitation of Western feminism, which, for decades under the Soviet Union, had been maligned as false solution to the "women's question" because it relied on a separate women's identity, on the uniqueness of women's social interests, as a result of which feminism was loaded concept, replete with negative stereotypes and prejudices). New orientations were conditions by the desire to explain the goals and tasks of feminism, to show their heterogeneity, to analyze its various components, and, in the end, to advance the idea of gender equality in Russia.

On occasion the devotion to education of Russian women scholars prevailed over meticulous work in the archives or the writing of monographs. Their educational mission was obviously more conspicuous than their activism and organizing work, i.e. the creation of small and medium-sized groups for the defense of women's rights.

Historians and philologists became increasingly interested in the subject of women as it concerned the history of the family, social thought and mentalities, education, and also new directions in the study of the past: the history of violence, the history of the body and sexual culture, and in particular the history of everyday life. These historians pursued their topics in the same way Western European scholars had,<sup>15</sup> i.e. through examinations of complex constellations of relationships between language, discourse, cultural practices, political economy, activism, and social transformations. However, those who wrote on these topics were often only superficially familiar with the history of feminism in general and of Russian feminism in particular, and they therefore assumed that a considered rethinking of feminist theory was not required.<sup>16</sup>

At times these scholars mocked their colleagues who were engaged in the advancement of feminist ideas through lectures and educative projects, and moreover, they dubbed these participants in various women's non-profits "*borchikhami*" (a non-existent feminine form of the Russian word "*borets*," meaning "someone involved in a campaign or struggle." The ending is analogous to those endings created on the basis of similar feminine forms of nouns: *kupets* (merchant) – *kupchikha* (female merchant); *tkach* (weaver) – *tkachikha* (female weaver).<sup>17</sup> The term

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<sup>15</sup> Mackie, Vera. The Language of Globalization, Transnationality and Feminism. // International Feminist Journal of Politics. . 2001. 3(2). P. 180–206.

<sup>16</sup> Translator's note: per Natal'ia Pushkareva, these scholars include E. A. Pavliuchenko, whose scholarship focuses on the wives and fiancées of the Decembrist revolutionaries, E. G. Fedosova, who examines the women members of the Russian late-19<sup>th</sup>-century revolutionary and terrorist organization The People's Will, and G. A. Tishkin, who has written about the women's question in 1840s-1860s Russia. Writing in the 1980s, these scholars intentionally distanced themselves from feminism.

<sup>17</sup> Translator's note: the examples Pushkareva provides here are largely neutral in connotation, but oftentimes the addition of this feminine ending to actor nouns creates a necessarily demeaning term. For example, *vrachikha* for a woman doctor or *zubnikha* for a woman dentist are demeaning.

mocked the professionalization of social activism, the possibility of receiving pay for such work. The mockery inherent in the term “*borchikha*” demonstrates the extent to which the hostility towards the ideas of Western feminism, propounded by Soviet ideologues for seventy years, are present in contemporary Russian society, even among scholars.

In our ten interviews for the project, we gain a sense of how slowly the scholarly community gave recognition to this new approach to the study of social processes, in which sex and its concomitant problems were made the center of attention. The activist role of intellectuals—feminist scholars developing gender studies—is indisputable.

The discourse developed by women scholars was intended to consolidate the independent women’s movement that appeared in 1991 and 1992 – precisely when the First and Second Independent Women’s Forums gathered (these are sometimes called congresses) in the Moscow oblast’ city of Dubna (three of our interviewees—Elena Kochkina, Mariia Kotovskaia, Ol’ga Voronina—were participants and they recounted in their interviews their impressions of those years).

In actuality no consolidation of the women’s movement occurred after the First and Second Women’s Forums. The gender centers which emerged in the 1990s began to compete with one another for foreign (American, French, German, British) grants. For the most part, only those women scholars who believed that Russia must follow the path of the West, that only that path could lay the ground for the spread of feminist ideas, could rely on such grants. At that time even among Russian scholars, there were very few who read the Western literature in order to apply for these grants. Because books about the history of the Russian liberal women’s movement had yet to be written in the 1990s, these other scholars proceeded from the idea that Russia could never be amenable to feminism in its Western understanding. This latter group’s goal was to independently acquaint itself with Western feminist literature and to spread the concept of gender through their own work and that of their students (Anna Temkina, Elena Zdravomyslova),<sup>18</sup> while at the same time “maintaining a respectable distance from the foreign” feminist theoretical inheritance (Galina Zvereva).<sup>19</sup>

Another group looked at the situation differently. They introduced the concept of “Russian Feminism” (I.I. Iukina)<sup>20</sup> and studied its early sources (Natal’ia Pushkareva).<sup>21</sup> They proceeded from a belief in the deep historical roots of the women’s liberal movement and its feminist orientation in Russia and believed that it could take hold in Russia again. They used their work to justify that future potential and called for others to rely on the Russian experience with feminism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>22</sup>

The adherents of these two groups represented dichotomous disciplines (sociology and political science vs. history), and they interacted, as a rule, at separate conferences, though they were united in their resistance to the current of traditionalism, which continued, despite the fall of the Soviet Union, to define the state’s approach to the “women’s question” and likewise continued to dominate popular opinion.<sup>23</sup> Despite this discourse among women scholars, those on whom women fighting for gender equality could rely—the democrats and liberal reformers (politicians and intellectuals)—did not see the connection between the issue of sex and social justice, which, women scholars argued, permeated the entire system of education, politics, the economy, and the family. In this they

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<sup>18</sup> Здравомыслова Е., Темкина А. Введение. Социальная конструкция гендера и гендерная система в России // Гендерное измерение социальной и политической активности в переходный период. СПб., 1996. Вып. 4. С. 46

<sup>19</sup> Зверева Г.И. “Чужое, свое, другое...”: феминистские и гендерные концепты в интеллектуальной культуре постсоветской России // Адам и Ева. Альманах гендерной истории. № 2. М.: ИВИ РАН, 2001. С. 239, 263

<sup>20</sup> Юкина И.И. Русский феминизм как вызов современности. СПб.: Алетейя, 2007. С. 442.

<sup>21</sup> Пушкарева Н.Л. У истоков русского феминизма: сходства и отличия России и Запада // Тишкин Г.А. (ред.) Российские женщины и европейская культура. СПб., 2002. С. 79-86.

<sup>22</sup> Ажгихина Н. На пути к обретению силы // Мы. Специальный выпуск. 2000.

URL:[http://www.owl.ru/win/info/we\\_my/2000\\_sp/05.htm](http://www.owl.ru/win/info/we_my/2000_sp/05.htm)

<sup>23</sup> Айвазова С.Г. . Российские выборы: гендерное прочтение / Консорциум женских неправительственных объединений; Институт социологии РАН. М., 2008. С. 29

differed greatly from their foreign colleagues and from their own predecessors, the revolutionaries of the 1860s, who believed that the struggle for democracy and the emancipation of women were one and the same.<sup>24</sup>

The creation of the Women of Russia faction in the State Duma in 1993 could have been considered a success in the development of the Russian women's movement. But that event only exacerbated the split between the movement on the ground and intellectuals involved in gender studies in their various disciplines. The elite groups in the capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg), which united women with degrees (those who knew foreign languages, who knew how to apply for grants, who spoke at foreign conferences), as it turned out, had little in common with the women's groups in the other regions of Russia, which were forming on the basis of self-help.<sup>25</sup> The latter included provincial intellectuals, many of whom had never been abroad, who suffered from the inattention to problems of domestic violence, women's alcoholism, and who had heard of feminist groups in the West only as those that "do not deal with the important problems of modernity" and "limit themselves to problems of emancipation."<sup>2627</sup>

Both divisions of the post-Soviet Russian women's movement—the group oriented towards direct help to women and the scholarly group—developed simultaneously and in parallel at the start of the 1990s. They together resisted the advance of traditionalism and conservatism, the renewed patriarchy.

Those oriented towards the political activism of women's feminist organizations proved to be very few, and their activity was negligible. Though these kinds of groups received aid from various Western foundations—which gave some of them the ability to come together as the Consortium of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations and others the chance to unite as the Interregional Alliance of Women's Leadership and Partnerships—these all-Russian organizations, oriented by feminist principles, only came together after the moment had passed, after the gender 90s.

At the beginning of the 2000s, Russian domestic politics took a conspicuous turn toward the construction of "a new vertical of power."<sup>28</sup> The possibilities for the creation of a civil society in Russian were severely reduced, and hopes for the independence of the women's movement were dashed. Women's feminist organizations managed to get by thanks to generous Western grants. Therefore, in order to peel women away from these organizations permanently, the state opposed to them a new set of women's organizations that were financed by previously non-existent foundations set up by the state.

Since 2004 the state began strictly regulating women's organizational activities and, necessarily, funding sources. No one ever tried to hide the total dependence of reborn old state organizations (the Union of Women of Russian appeared in place of the Committee of Soviet Women) and new women's organizations (the Movement of Women of Russia, the Social-Democratic Union of Women of Russia, the Union of Women of Greater Moscow, etc.) on the state. The encroachment of the state on independent women's organizations was also felt in its flirtation with the Russian Orthodox Church and the state's tendency towards the clericalization of the ideological, cultural, and spiritual life of Russian society. In this context, the appearance in 2010 of the Union of Orthodox Women<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Translator's note: Pushkareva is here referring to the so-called "men of the sixties," the best known of which were the déclassé intellectuals Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1828-1889), Nikolai Dobroliubov (1836-1861), and Dmitrii Pisarev (1840-1868). This generation of revolutionary intellectuals rejected the Hegelian idealism of their predecessors ("the men of the 1840s") for the materialism then popular in Western Europe at the time.

Chernyshevskii perhaps best articulated this intellectual generation's relationship to the subject of equal rights for women in his 1863 novel *What is to Be Done?* The novel's main character, Vera Pavlovna, is depicted as the ideal emancipated woman. She escapes the control of her parents and arranges a fake marriage for herself in order to achieve economic independence. Her and other women's emancipation is depicted as necessary to the creation of socialist workers' cooperatives in the short term and the achievement of a perfect society in the distant future.

<sup>25</sup> Ажгихина Н. На пути к обретению силы // Мы. Специальный выпуск. 2000.

URL:[http://www.owl.ru/win/info/we\\_my/2000\\_sp/05.htm](http://www.owl.ru/win/info/we_my/2000_sp/05.htm)

<sup>26</sup> Петрова Л.И. Феминизм // Советская историческая энциклопедия. Т. 15. М.: «СЭ», 1974. С. 16

<sup>27</sup> Translator's note: Per Pushkareva, emancipation here indicates the political rights and legal equality that Russian already possess and for that reason they dismiss it. "Women's emancipation" held a much broader meaning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and could include liberation from the family and from gender norms and responsibilities.

<sup>28</sup> Дзись-Войнаровский Н. Семерых полпредов за одного вице-президента. Совет по национальной стратегии предлагает изменить структуру управления Россией // Лента.ру. 23.09.2003

(<https://lenta.ru/articles/2003/09/23/conspiracy/>); Белковский С. Государство и олигархия: 10 лет спустя // Слон.ру. 04.06.2013 ([https://slon.ru/russia/embargo\\_do\\_21\\_gosudarstvo\\_i\\_oligarkhiya\\_10 лет\\_spustya-949243.xhtml](https://slon.ru/russia/embargo_do_21_gosudarstvo_i_oligarkhiya_10 лет_spustya-949243.xhtml))

<sup>29</sup> Союз православных женщин // <http://xn--80aafbpfcowwcbdbmqnh4f3dsb6c.xn--p1ai/>

seems appropriate, and the increasing appeal to Orthodox morality to justify the renewed patriarchal ideology and the appeal to paternalism as concerns women (and really all citizens) are likewise logical.

When, at the end of November of 2008, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Women's Congress in Russian in 1908, the Second All-Russian Women's Congress began its work in one of Moscow's most prestigious buildings, the Columned Hall of the House of Unions, it became clear that the state had no intention to take into account the two women's forums in Dubna 17 years earlier. While there were some at the Congress who believed it important to articulate the idea of gender equality, the vast majority of participants disagreed, preferring to speak about the threat of Western values and the crisis of the Russian traditional family. They insisted that "the ideology of particular rights for women" arrived here as a result of "bourgeois feminism."<sup>30</sup>

Activists and scholars' inability to find a common language cost the women's movement in Russia dearly.

For the 15 to 20 years of the existence of women's organizations in post-Soviet Russia, there was an unprecedented conflict not only between traditionalist women and feminists, but also between women activists and women scholars. After the Second Independent Women's Forum in Dubna (1992), one of the activists said: "you're scholars? Well, go and do your scholarship, and we, the activists, will handle the women's movement."<sup>31</sup> But it quickly became clear that, if activists don't supply themselves with what scholars and experts, by way of great labor, turn up, then women's organizations quickly lose those clear goals of their work and just end up occupying themselves with some inconspicuous activity that the Soviet Union already did all those seven decades.

This difficult situation and the rivalry between activists and scholars in Russian became so much clear with the start of the economic recession in 2008, which made all the problems of gender equality secondary. Not only in Russian, but in a number of other countries many women's organizations ceased operations because of a lack of funding. The American Global Fund for Women stopped giving development grants to women's NGOs. Western foundations, because of the conservative turn in Russian domestic politics, turned their attention away from Moscow to the regions and later either reduced their activity or were even expelled from Russia. In the end, women's NGOs in the capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg) managed to survive only thanks to their professionalism and old connections with foreign partners. Their members adapted their work to the changing political conditions, while continuing to advance the idea of gender equality.

As for the women's organizations dependent on the state, they were not in a position to formulate strategic goals and tactical short-term plans for work with women as a particular social group. They didn't want to take anything "Western" into account, and their orientation towards "spiritual ties," which they announced at the beginning of the 2010s didn't help them any with the creation of goals, which would actually be in the interests of opportunities for women. A few organizations, which had earlier considered themselves feminist, have recently begun to tow the state line. They have joined the Movement of Women of Russia (which is connected with United Russia). They have reoriented themselves ideologically from the defense of gender equality to the maintenance of "the traditional moral values of Russia."

Our interviewees, who are in some way or other connected with women's feminist organizations, had different views on the prospects of women's movement in the future and the direction of the gender research in their discipline. The majority of them tried with all their might to maintain their optimism. Several spoke hopefully about the appearance of social media and the popular discussion of women's rights, discrimination, and equal rights.<sup>32</sup> After all, for a few years now feminist groups have existed on Facebook and had good results. Groups such as Gender and Feminism and For Feminism.<sup>33</sup> However, analysis of the interviews with these Russian women scholars in various scholarly disciplines confirms that the women's movement in Russia remains, as it has been, split and uncoordinated. Despite the strong impact of the liberal ideas of Western feminism, the abatement of the movement's energy in the 2000s coincided with

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<sup>30</sup> Гапова Е.И. Итоги съезда: еще раз о классовом вопросе постсоветского феминизма // Журн. Исследований социальной политики . 2009. No 4. С. 465—484.

<sup>31</sup> Воронина О.А. Съезд всех съест // Гендерные исследования. 2008. No 18. С. 349—356;

<sup>32</sup> Frau\_derrida, Isya, Mujj. Польза от разговоров (об опыте одного просветительского проекта в блогосфере) // Гендерная дискриминация: практики преодоления в контексте межсекторного взаимодействия. Иваново: Ивановский центр гендерных исследований, 2009. С. 107—114.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GenderFeminism/>; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/zafeminizm/>;

the crisis of liberal and democratic reform in Russia. Unfortunately, as of now, that leaves us with little hope that new wave of independent activity and a tendency towards unity will soon appear.