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My Coffee with Sergei — or, a Television Anchorman and the Making of Vladimir Putin

By Gregory Feifer

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Moscow—It's unusual for a would-be politician in heavily bureaucratized Russia to take off his suit for public appearances, unless there's a reason for it. Vladimir Putin donned military uniforms to review the troops before his election as president. Then there's Umar Dzbrailov, the slight, long-haired, forty-something, reputedly mafia-connected Moscow businessman of Chechen origin, who also ran for president in 2000. Dzbrailov prefers black leather, bought billboard space all over Moscow urging citizens to vote for a "stylish" candidate, and came up with less than one percent of the vote. So when Sergei Dorenko arrived at a Moscow news conference wearing a black turtle-neck and a soft brown leather jacket over his solid frame, he was clearly signaling his difference from the rest of the pack—not that he had to.



Sergei Dorenko on ORT television

Dorenko's press conference was at the central Mir Novostei news agency, the facilities of which are a little run-down, in typical post-Soviet fashion. Perhaps the state of disrepair adds an extra tinge of underground cachet to the often notorious and sometimes scandalous personages who wax eloquent within Mir Novostei's quarters. When former Kremlin official Pavel Borodin was arrested in New York earlier this year on an international arrest warrant, for example (he is suspected of receiving millions of dollars of kickbacks for a contract to renovate the Kremlin), "businessman" Sergei Mikhailov came to Mir Novostei to defend his compatriot. It was a strange moment. Mikhailov is better known as "Mikhas," the alleged leader of one of Russia's most feared organized criminal gangs. (Mikhailov himself spent time in a Swiss jail and thus evidently considers himself an expert on international law.)

Dorenko is no less an *enfant terrible* than those who preceded him into the Mir Novostei precincts. A long-time journalist who speaks fluent Spanish and spent time as a correspondent for CNN's Latin American bureaus, Dorenko rose to become news anchor at ORT, the top TV channel once controlled by controversial tycoon Boris Berezovsky. Dorenko and Berezovsky were—and still are—very close (the two often wrote "analysis" together).

The 41-year-old Dorenko is handsome. He's a former male model—square-jawed, and gruff. His slow, deadpan-delivery baritone voice is unmistakable. As Russia's most-watched telejournalist, he used his position to issue a stream

of vitriol and personal poison against the Kremlin opposition—headed by former Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and powerful Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov—during the country's 1999 parliamentary elections. Thus, almost single-handedly, Dorenko lowered the level of Russian journalism, making sure it would irrevocably become a political tool above all else. Many Russians loved him (as they claimed to love Putin). Many more loathed him and continue to do so.

And yet Dorenko remains a sympathetic character. In private, he speaks eloquently and convincingly, which is perhaps unsurprising given his profession. He's well educated and easily undermines pretentious literary references used by his critics (common among Russia's literary minded intelligentsia). A perennial outsider and rabble-rouser even when standing next to the seat of power, Dorenko is now running for a seat on the Moscow City legislature, the turf of his old political foes. A key player in the engineering of Putin's rise to power, he is now fiercely critical of the president, and especially the effective state takeover of ORT's onetime rival television channel, the formerly independent NTV. As if the sheer looniness of his current situation weren't enough, Dorenko is now facing two court battles. One is a mundane libel suit. The other concerns an incident last spring, when a naval officer accused Dorenko of running him over on a Moscow pedestrian walkway while riding his motorcycle. (Dorenko says it was the officer who attacked *him*.)

Dorenko is a unique character on the Russian public

stage. I decided to meet him to try to get to the bottom of the seemingly endless senselessness of Russia's political paradoxes. But when I spoke to him—trying to describe those paradoxes in ways he couldn't easily dismiss—I found myself confronted with... well, an enigma, wrapped in a mystery, inside a riddle. Dorenko speaks compellingly about Russia and its culture and problems and at the same time illustrates them—unwittingly or not—even better.

Exits and Entrances

Dorenko asked me to meet him at his club—the 4x4 Club which, it turned out, specializes in “jeepery,” or people enthusiastic about off-road vehicles. “They may look a little wild,” Dorenko said on the telephone of his fellow members, “but don't worry, they won't hurt you.” The club is nestled amid the woods of Moscow's most prestigious suburban address, along Rublyovskoe highway. The area is home to the dachas of the super-élite, including Boris Yeltsin and the hospital where he spent much of the last years of his presidency.

The 4x4 Club consists of a collection of two-story buildings, an array of sport-utility vehicles, a Jeep accessories shop, and a helicopter dealership with a new, executive model displayed out front. I met Dorenko in a bar on the second floor of the clubhouse. Apart from television monitors showing endless loops of Land Rovers driving through muck and a Jeep's front end suspended on a wall, Hard-Rock Café-style, the bar seemed like any other. The club's founder was there, along with a rally driver and other clan



members. Dorenko, who had driven up in a massive, shiny, new Dodge pickup truck—a ludicrous-looking Moscow status symbol—walked in to a warm reception. In the interest of getting a good interview, I was glad he'd noticed—and approved of—my own battered Land Rover parked in front.

Despite his reputation, Dorenko gets a lot of respect—and for good reason. In the past decade-and-a-half, he's worked for all the major channels in Russia, including the three national stations—ORT, NTV, RTR—as well as second-tier TV6 and Ren-TV. He's never stayed at any one more than two years. A military interpreter by training, he also, as I mentioned, worked as a free-lance correspondent for CNN's Latin American bureaus, covering—in Spanish—the Russian presidential election in 1996. He returned to ORT the same year—for the third time. Berezovsky was by then wielding massive influence over the channel, despite owning only 49 percent of the station's shares against the government's 51 percent.

During his stint with a weekly show on ORT, Dorenko earned himself several lawsuits and frequent charges of being paid by Berezovsky for his attacks on First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, architect of Russia's privatization program. Dorenko also went after banking-oil-and-metals tycoon Vladimir Potanin, one of the chief beneficiaries of that program. (Chubais and Potanin were Berezovsky's chief rivals—Chubais for influence in the Kremlin, and Potanin in business.)

After a series of postings, including that of general producer of ORT's news service, Dorenko was pulled from his on-air job on the "Vremya" evening news program in December 1998. Dorenko's rises and falls often reflected what was going on behind the scenes in the Kremlin, especially Berezovsky's part in them. But this time Dorenko's removal was a sign of something larger—the dramatic change following the country's ruinous economic crisis of August that year. The real battles, however, lay ahead.

Dorenko Comes into His Own: The 1999 Election Campaign

Dorenko got his job back in 1999, around the time Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov—whom practically all Russians expected to become the ailing Yeltsin's successor as president—launched a broadside attack against the government. Kick-starting a bitter war of words, Luzhkov declared the Kremlin had made him its "number-one enemy."

Luzhkov and the NTV television station's parent company, Media-Most—headed by media magnate Vladimir Gusinsky, a key Luzhkov ally—followed by unleashing a barrage of criticism against Yeltsin's administration. NTV claimed, for one thing, that City Hall and Media-Most were victims of police harassment because of their criticism of the Kremlin. NTV's increasing anti-Yeltsin stand must have seemed particularly galling to the Kremlin, if for no other

reason than the channel had only recently campaigned on the president's behalf. That was during the 1996 election season, after the Yeltsin camp had forged a political truce with the country's so-called business "oligarchs" to make a united stand against the Communists.

Three years later, the pact was ancient history. Most of NTV's Kremlin criticism came from the Sunday-night "Itogi" current-affairs program, hosted by Yevgeny Kiselyov, NTV co-founder and Russia's most popular journalist. Speaking on "Itogi," Luzhkov said he believed Yeltsin's inner circle had no intention of letting their leader step down after an election. The Syem Dnei publishing house, part of the Media-Most empire, also contributed. Its flagship *Segodnya* newspaper, a liberal daily, reported that tax police had raided the Syem Dnei offices only six months after a Tax Inspectorate audit had given the publishing house a clean bill of health—and one day after NTV joined the mayor in excoriating Berezovsky and Kremlin chief-of-staff Alexander Voloshin. "Itogi" aired sinister-looking pictures of Voloshin and compared him to Lenin, to whom Voloshin has an uncanny resemblance, not least because of his bald crown and pointed goatee. The program reported that Voloshin, a Berezovsky protégé, was deeply involved in a Berezovsky investment company called AVVA, which had swindled thousands of unwitting depositors.

Berezovsky's ORT fought back—and harder. Berezovsky himself called Gusinsky "dangerous," saying he controlled too much of the country's media. Berezovsky also warned that a Luzhkov presidency could lead to "bloodshed," the *Moscow Times* reported. ORT, meanwhile, began to run aggressive reports that NTV was mired in debt. As the campaign season wore on, standards dropped to ever-new lows. For example, in a program denouncing Luzhkov, Dorenko inserted scenes of the Prosecutor General romping in bed with two prostitutes. Since the two were in the same camp, the sex was meant to display the general degradation of the whole group. Most of the "evidence," if not all, was rather indirect. There was no hard evidence, for example, backing up the claim that Luzhkov was complicit in the murder of an American businessman—only someone being interviewed talking about it. Analysts dubbed the tactics "black PR."

Dorenko Enlists

During my meeting with him, Dorenko defended the Kremlin's actions. "In the fall of 1999, the Kremlin was already defeated," he said. "That's very important to understand. The Kremlin was empty. Yeltsin didn't go to work at all. He lived in the hospital. And Luzhkov and Primakov were already dividing up Cabinet portfolios."

Dorenko says he came around to that view from his own experience. He says it was on Primakov's direct order that he was fired from ORT in November 1998, just after the crisis that led to Primakov's appointment as prime minister. "[Primakov] personally forced me to resign because I

ran an interview with employees of the FSB secret service," Dorenko said. "It was a special department that generals used for commercial purposes. The generals traded in illegal vodka, for example—controlled it like racketeers—and when a 'commercial' competitor arrived, say an underground vodka distillery, the secret department would be sent to destroy the factory at night. [The subordinate officers] were forced to deal with the kidnapping of people and so on.

"When I showed the interview, Primakov—who was closely tied to the secret services—forced the [ORT] general director to fire me. I lost my job. So I knew with whom I was dealing. I was afraid of them."

Dorenko also says that six months after Primakov's appointment, police began interrogating his friends. "It was serious psychological pressure. They were asking someone to give evidence that I wasn't paying my taxes properly in order to have a way of manipulating me. Or punishing me. But after six months of interrogations, they discovered that they—the government—actually owed me \$32 for 1995! It was such an insult," he added. "And it was all done on the command of Primakov and Luzhkov.

"It's important to remember that in September 1999, *they* were the strong side and we were weak. When people say 'The Kremlin, the Kremlin, the Kremlin,' it seems it's a great power. But in 1999, power was in the hands of Luzhkov and Primakov. Everyone laughed at the Kremlin. The governors were all in [Luzhkov's] Fatherland [party]. All the governors. We couldn't approach anyone. The game was over."

Dorenko says he considered moving to America at the time, not least for his own safety. "I understood that if Luzhkov and Primakov were to come to power, then the minimum for me would be jail." It was only after Yeltsin—who managed to stage a post-crisis comeback—fired Primakov in May 1999 that Dorenko was able to return to ORT. "Berezovsky called me in and asked, 'Do you want to come back to television?'" Dorenko said. "And I answered, 'Of course.' He said, 'But do you understand how difficult it will be for you when you have such enemies who will soon take over the country?' I replied, 'Borya, I know what the result will be: You will be hanged among the first five. And I'll be among the first ten. That's certain.' But I said, 'Let's make a Cossack raid for posterity. When there's nothing to lose, it's necessary to attack.'"

Attack he did. He was drafted to anchor his own Sunday-night program to compete with Kiselyov's "Itogi" on NTV. The show was called "The Sergei Dorenko Program." As his programs began to air in the fall of 1999, Dorenko exceeded all norms. He accused Luzhkov of corruption, extortion, even complicity in the murder of an American businessman. The ploy worked. Dorenko proved to be wildly popular. So he upped the stakes. In October, Dorenko went after Primakov—who was at the time regularly ranked the country's most popular politician—by saying the former prime minister was physically unfit to serve as president

because of a hip replacement he underwent in Switzerland. ORT aired three minutes of graphic footage of the operation being performed, complete with blood and bone-drilling—only the operation shown had been performed on someone else. Another report from a hospital in Bern, Switzerland, where the former prime minister reportedly underwent surgery, relayed that such an operation, together with a stay in a separate guarded unit, would have cost between \$40,000 and \$45,000 of taxpayer money. In the same program, Dorenko reported that a former U.S. security official had accused Primakov of involvement in an assassination attempt against Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Dorenko was charting new territory. He now says he came up with the hospital footage idea after having spoken to a fellow news anchor. "[She] said something positive about Primakov," Dorenko said. "So I told her about my relations with Primakov and said that it's very big hypocrisy that the very ill Primakov is criticizing the very ill Yeltsin for the state of his health. I said they had to criticize him about something else. Primakov is also a sick person... He had a complicated operation in Switzerland. He got a new hip. And the second hip also has to be operated on... So we showed the operation being done in Moscow—it was being done on some woman.

"We showed it rather naturalistically," Dorenko added, modestly. "But when we talk about having a sick Yeltsin, yes that's true, of course he's ill. Terribly ill. And we are sick of him. SICK of him. But you want a second one just like him?"

Later in the same program, Dorenko turned to a sex scandal involving former Procurator General Yuri Skuratov, another Yeltsin foe. Earlier in the year, the president had tried unsuccessfully several times to fire Skuratov after the top prosecutor began investigating Berezovsky and other Kremlin insiders, including Borodin. The Dorenko show aired parts of an already infamous Kremlin-made tape showing a man "resembling" Skuratov cavorting in bed with two prostitutes. Dorenko interspersed the footage with clips of members of the upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, defending Skuratov—and criticizing Yeltsin. It was a bald attempt to compromise regional leaders who had stuck up for Skuratov, chiefly Luzhkov.

Minutes after the program ended, an outraged Primakov telephoned NTV's simultaneously broadcast "Itogi," which was still on-air, to deny Dorenko's accusations. The former prime minister—who had been visibly ailing for some time and often required a cane for walking—challenged the burly Dorenko to "swim any distance convenient to him." The affair represented yet another new low in a series of new lows. Critics blasted Dorenko for not even paying lip service to a single issue or political platform. Even Dorenko admits there wasn't a shred of an attempt to create an appearance of objectivity in his commentary.

Dorenko defends himself in part by saying he had also

criticized Yeltsin in the past. "I, Sergei Dorenko, was forced out of work by Yeltsin in 1995 because I was the first who began to say that *he* had bad health. The first—that's the truth. No one else had said it on television. [Chief presidential bodyguard Alexander] Korzhakov had me fired on Yeltsin's orders.

"That's why I have the right to say that Yeltsin feels better today than he did in 1996."

In another of his 1999 campaign-season programs, Dorenko also used montage to lambaste Luzhkov. He showed archived footage of Luzhkov stumping on behalf of Yeltsin in 1996. It was then that Luzhkov, along with the country's oligarchs, had made a temporary truce with the Kremlin. "In 1996, Luzhkov was yelling 'Russia! Yeltsin! Victory!'" Dorenko told me. "That was right after Yeltsin's heart attack. So I said, 'That's hypocrisy.'"

Dorenko spliced the footage together with video of present-day Luzhkov criticizing Yeltsin, his onetime ally.

Dorenko: "[Luzhkov] would go to meetings and would say, 'Yeltsin's bad, Yeltsin's sick.' So I put him into a ladder-like montage. 'Yeltsin's bad, Yeltsin's sick,' followed by 'Russia! Yeltsin! Victory!' I didn't do much of a commentary because he spoke for himself. What's it got to do with me? Of course he's a hypocrite. That's what my cycle [of 1999 programs] began with," Dorenko said. "Fifteen programs, which I call 15 silver bullets.

"Then [Luzhkov] started to answer me. He began to call me to debates. Then he would refuse himself to take part. In short, it was very funny. I didn't think it would happen that way myself... He and I became two characters. I'd touch him and he'd yell. And I couldn't not react. That's first. Second, it was an honor for me. Because he's a politician on the federal level. He's a great person, a big person. Imagine if you wrote a newspaper article and former President Clinton or President Bush began yelling at you when answering at a news conference. 'That Feifer! I know that Feifer! He's a good-for-nothing!' Just imagine it. What does that mean for you? It's a triumph. It's clear you have to write the next article. You cannot *not* write the next article.

"He did it to himself. I didn't tell him to do it. One of his learned advisers told him to do it. They even brought over consultants from France. Seriously! [Laughing] Now we know it was his mistake."

I asked Dorenko when it had become clear to him that the battle had been won—when the Luzhkov-Primakov coalition had lost the presidency. "I knew that he [Putin] had won from about the second half of October 1999," he replied. "I went to see Boris in [the Caucasus region of] Karachayevo-Cherkessia, where he was running for the Duma, and he asked me, 'Do you think everything's okay?'—in the sense that he didn't have to return [to Moscow] himself... And I said, 'Yes.'"

Person "X"

Dorenko insists the Kremlin's only goal in 1999 was to stop Luzhkov and Primakov from coming to power. "There was no such goal as, 'Hey, let's have Putin,'" he said. "I didn't even know what kind of person he was. I just knew that we had person x and the other person was without question an evildoer. Without question he would have people arrested, without question initiate repression. Without question there would be a review of the results of privatization. And then there's person x," Dorenko added. "I don't know. He could be the same or not. But the others—I already know who they are. They're horrible."

It's common knowledge that in the fall of 1999, Berezovsky was central in engineering the rise of Vladimir Putin. According to Dorenko, the backroom strategist was more than simply central. He was crucial because he was the only member of the Kremlin entourage, dubbed the "Family," who believed in victory in the looming June 2000 presidential elections. That contest, everyone knew, would be all-but-decided by the elections to parliament in December 1999. By most accounts, the "Family" included Berezovsky, Yeltsin's daughter and adviser Tatyana Dyachenko, former chief-of-staff Valentin Yumashev—a young, one-time journalist who became Yeltsin's speech and ghostwriter—and current chief-of-staff Voloshin. "He was important," Dorenko said of Berezovsky, "chiefly because he forced other people in the Kremlin to believe in victory. Because the Kremlin was thinking of where to flee. They were already thinking of how to save themselves. "[Berezovsky] would walk around crying out, 'We'll defeat all of them! We'll defeat all of them!' He was really yelling." Off record, Dorenko described the much stronger language Berezovsky used to indicate what exactly the Kremlin insiders envisioned doing to their opponents.

Even when he became stricken with illness, Berezovsky maintained his vigor. "He was lying on a hospital cot with an intravenous needle," Dorenko continued, "and I was telling him, 'Borya, quit yelling. Lie quietly.' And he was still crying out. 'Borya, sit tight. Sit tight, the needle's going to fall out. I'm going to call the nurse over. Stop it. Your eyes are going yellow.' It was horrible."

Berezovsky pushed ahead in his work. That fall, he almost single-handedly cobbled together a pro-Kremlin political party called Unity. He did that in part by flying on his private jet to numerous regions to talk influential governors into leaving the Luzhkov-Primakov alliance and joining Unity instead. "He was explaining things to everyone like a chessmaster," Dorenko said. "You'll do this and we'll do this and this and this. "He dealt with the elite. And I, the electorate. That's how we divided the layers. And that's it," Dorenko said laughing.

I asked him if it was really that simple. "Yes, that simple," he replied. "In a month, [Berezovsky] was already traveling to the élites and saying, 'Do you see the ratings?'" (Over the course of Dorenko's 15 programs, Luzhkov's na-

tional public opinion ratings fell from 16 percent to 2 percent, according to one poll.)

An Exemplary Student

The effects of Dorenko's campaign on the media itself were more profound than even he could have predicted. Ironically, the fallout would not only help wrench control of NTV and a number of other media outlets from Gusinsky's hands, but also take ORT away from Berezovsky. Television became an ever-more powerful political tool, and the administration could no longer risk allowing national channels to remain controlled by potential opponents.

Few buy Dorenko's explanations. Moscow sociologist Boris Kagarlitsky acknowledges there was "a degree of fear in the Kremlin and among the oligarchs in the spring and summer [of 1999]." But he dismisses the bulk of Dorenko's justifications as a form of cynicism. "These people [in the Kremlin] really *should* have been arrested [by Luzhkov and Primakov]. That's necessary. How can you have a state based on rule of law where thieves and murderers aren't arrested? 'It's clear that Dorenko speaks for criminals who didn't want to be punished,'" Kagarlitsky added.

Yuri Korgunyuk, a political analyst at Moscow's Indem Research Group, gives Dorenko a little more credit. "Dorenko often mixes completely reasonable observations with attempts to make an idealist of himself," Korgunyuk said. "In fact, there's a large degree of truth in his words. If Luzhkov and Primakov had come to power, of course there would have been some shuffling around—and of course if anyone were to have been in an unfavorable situation, it would have been Berezovsky. But things didn't come out favorably for Berezovsky anyway."

Korgunyuk agrees with Kagarlitsky about Dorenko's exaggeration of the threat to democracy posed by Luzhkov and Primakov. "To talk about some kind of repressions—at least comparable to those in Belarus, Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan—isn't right. It would have been hard to carry out such large-scale dismantling with victims and so on in Russia—not to speak of some kind of thought-out process."

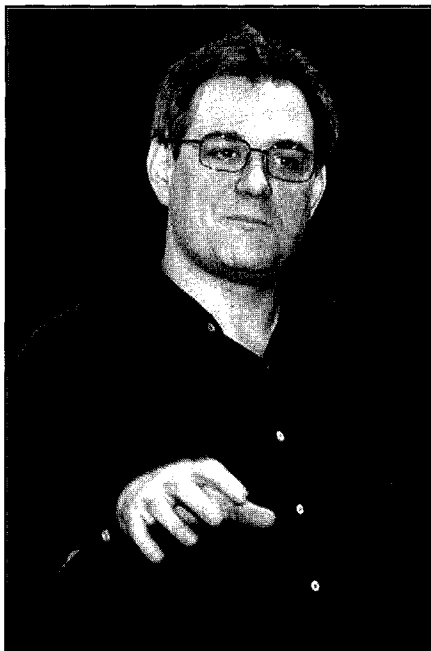
Korgunyuk also says the Kremlin was not nearly as weak as Dorenko would have it. "In May 1999, Yeltsin very easily fired Primakov," he said. "There was no revolution or coup. It was clear the Kremlin, which in September 1998 [following the crisis] gave up some of its power, had regained it by May 1999."

Korgunyuk says Dorenko also exaggerates Berezovsky's

role. "If someone really did control the situation, it was Yeltsin foremost," he told me. "Notwithstanding what Berezovsky says about himself, he was never first fiddle. And he never overshadowed Yeltsin. One has to give Yeltsin his due: he was a fairly large state actor. He always made his decisions for himself. He had to deal with a certain degree of manipulation. But any large high-ranking official can be manipulated to a certain degree."

While the degree of Berezovsky's—and Dorenko's—political influence may be disputed, it's clear that the flinging of vitriol in which Dorenko took the lead irreparably scarred

the political stage, helping move it away from a place in which ideas could have been debated and compromise sought to one in which power rested on doing everything possible to destroy political opponents. By sinking to their new lows, both ORT and NTV contributed significantly in pushing Russia away from its perceived trajectory toward democracy. A functioning democracy, after all, cannot function without a free press. But Russia's media barons chose to turn their holdings into propaganda machines. As a result, the public remained truly uninformed during the 1999 election season. Perhaps more immediately important, the bitterness of the accusations flung in the press meant that whoever came out on top in December would seek revenge for the previous six months of backstabbing.



Dorenko

Dorenko, meanwhile, dismisses criticism of his effect on journalism in general as "nonsense. You can't say that we have something here that doesn't exist over there [in the West]," he said. "There's a genre called 'opinion.' I saw opinions that were very harsh. The opinion section takes up a whole page in a newspaper. And there's the editorial where opinions are also voiced. Then there's the correspondent. The correspondents in *my* programs were like angels, like saints. I always told them, 'Look gang, you're like witnesses in court. It doesn't matter what you say. A correspondent can't give his opinion. A correspondent says, 'I'm testifying.' And not a word more."

"But I'm not a correspondent," Dorenko added. "I'm a person who says beforehand that this program is my opinion. Here's the reportage. And here's my opinion. It's called 'Sergei Dorenko's Program.' A program about my opinions. Don't I have a right to an opinion? I think so. Can it be called journalism? I don't know. I only know that people buy tickets to see it."

Korgunyuk, for his part, says that by the time Dorenko's 15 programs aired in the fall of 1999, Russian journalism had already sunk so low that Dorenko "couldn't add or take anything away. He was the most exemplary student in the

flinging of all kinds of filth. But he didn't so much ruin the face of journalism as a profession as his own reputation."

Out In the Cold Once Again

Soon after Putin's appointment as acting president in January 2000 and his bona-fide election the following March, the alliance between Berezovsky, Dorenko and Putin and his new cronies in government began to crumble. The fallout culminated in June, when Berezovsky wrote an open letter criticizing new legislation proposed by Putin aimed at reining in the country's regional governors. In May, the president had sent a bill to parliament calling for the most fundamental changes yet to the country's 1993 Constitution through the strengthening of central power, a cornerstone of his policies. The measures included creating seven administrative districts to be supervised by presidential appointees; removing governors from the Federation Council; and making it possible for the president to sack governors more-or-less directly.

Berezovsky, who had been elected to the State Duma, said he would be obliged to vote against the legislative project, which was "directed toward changing the state's structure" and represented a "threat to Russia's territorial integrity and democracy." The move constituted an open break with the president, after which Berezovsky soon found himself in self-imposed exile abroad.

Left alone to fend for himself, Dorenko aired a program bitterly criticizing Putin for his mishandling of the August sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine. He was fired the following month. The move was widely seen as part of Putin's attempt to crack down on his critics—in this case by closing his grip over ORT. "I did the program on the Kursk in the full knowledge that my career at ORT would end," Dorenko said at his October news conference. "I wrote the script from my heart. And my editor said to me, 'You know that if you go on air with this, it will be your last broadcast.'"

Soon after, Berezovsky was pressured into handing over his 49 percent of ORT to a former protégé who showed his own willingness to bend to the Kremlin's wishes by giving control of the channel back to the government. Berezovsky said at the time that presidential chief-of-staff Voloshin demanded that he give up his shares to the state or "follow in the steps of [NTV founder Vladimir] Gusinsky." (Gusinsky was briefly arrested in July in what

was seen as a flap over NTV's criticism of the Kremlin.)

Why did Berezovsky break with the man he helped install in the Kremlin? According to Dorenko, it was the magnate's own political aspirations that set him against the president. Dorenko said his patron pined for a different kind of influence than he already had—one in which he would play a more open role. As Dorenko has it, Berezovsky no longer wanted to compromise his reputation with the kind of shady dealings he'd carried out in building his economic empire.¹

"Boris doesn't understand what money is," Dorenko said. "He's not a traditional wealthy person. He doesn't like money. He sees it only as a means. He often also did other things he didn't like, [like] groveling in front of people. It feels bad. He was like that in front of [former presidential chief bodyguard Alexander] Korzhakov. Berezovsky was always running to him: 'Alexander Vasilych! Alexander Vasilych! I want to do this—it's good for the president.' And it was probably eating at him. But he understood there was no other way."²

"So he told himself, 'Well, this is our president [Putin], a good guy who'll help Russia become a stable country. In which there will be two parties. One of them will be a party of big business. The other will be a party of highly professional people and of mid-size business. These are parties he wanted to create.

"Berezovsky refused to include himself in the system," Dorenko continued. "He understood that life is short. That he has six children, that these children want to live in Russia." Why stay in Russia? "It's difficult in general for Russians outside of Russia," Dorenko explained. "We are romantics and it's difficult to live in the West. The West is too pragmatic. It kills us. But to live in less civilized countries is also hard because we can't create rigorous personal structures like the English. Even in Africa, English remain English. We can't do that."

To create the stable system Berezovsky wanted, Dorenko said, it was necessary for him to oppose Putin. "I told him that from March 27 [the day after the presidential elections], we will have to be in the opposition. It was my idea. He asked why. I said, 'Don't you understand that we battled, we risked our lives? But if we struggled to create a new Yeltsin system, then we have to leave.'" In other words,

¹I've outlined Berezovsky's climb to power in previous newsletters. A mathematics professor under the Soviet Union, Berezovsky began his business career with a car dealership through which he financially crippled Russia's largest automaker, Lada. He did that by buying cars far below value and paying off the company's top management. He relied on Chechen mafia groups for protection and muscle and has been accused of numerous crimes, including murder. Ahead of the 1996 presidential elections, Berezovsky penetrated the Yeltsin entourage by dispensing favors—backing a book of Yeltsin memoirs—and benefited tremendously during the notorious loans-for-shares privatization giveaway, when he acquired Sibneft oil company. Along the way, Berezovsky expanded into media, buying into the Soviet-era Izvestiya newspaper, the independent Nezavisimaya Gazeta, second-tier TV6, and, of course, ORT.

²Dorenko's depiction of Berezovsky's attitude toward money and influence contrasts with others', including that of financier-philanthropist George Soros. Writing in *The New York Review of Books* last year, Soros lambasted Berezovsky's taste for kitsch, his conspicuous display of opulence, and what he saw as Berezovsky's overriding desire to crush his enemies.

Dorenko said, why put up with a president they didn't like if they'd refused to do it before? "We had already acted against the instinct of self-preservation," he said. "And to return to a search for comfort wasn't right because then we should have come to terms with Luzhkov."

(At this point in the interview, Dorenko's mobile phone rang and he excused himself to discuss buying several truckloads of potatoes. "I want to sell them on the street," he explained to me later. "You can't do anything on the street without the mafia becoming immediately involved. I want to do a program about it.")

Returning to the topic at hand, Dorenko told me that Berezovsky had approached Putin with his plan to create several new political parties. "It's a very important idea for him," Dorenko said of Berezovsky. "He's a Jew, a person a-priori doomed never to be in the mainstream. He can never occupy key positions in the state and so on. He can only be somewhere on the side. However high up, but only on the side—as an adviser, an aide, sometimes even a deputy. But he can never be the top dog. He wanted to overcome that. He wanted to become one of the leaders of an opposition party of big business."³

"So he went to Putin. But he failed to understand that in front of him was sitting someone who was already president. That was in April [2000]. [Berezovsky] said, 'Volodya, [in the familiar form of address], don't you understand that you have to leave after a period of time, that we have to create a system that will live after us?'" Dorenko said. "He was probably already hinting that 'you, Volodya, will have to leave office in four years.' That is, he was saying in essence, 'You're a temporary means. You have to use the fact that you're sitting in that chair to build a stable system that will stand for three or four centuries.'"

American history—or Berezovsky's version of it, according to Dorenko—loomed large in his conception of that stable system. "'America,' Berezovsky said, 'was created by the people. But we can't forget that the key things were done simply by individuals. A person just went and thought things up—Jefferson, Lincoln, Washington. It wasn't the people. Just intelligent people.'"

"Of course Putin was probably upset that he [Berezovsky] was emphasizing his own superiority—intellectual superiority. He didn't say it outright, but the context was 'I Berezovsky will think it up and you Putin will carry it out.' That couldn't but have upset Putin. That's clear."

Dorenko says he warned Berezovsky at the time that his plans wouldn't pan out. "I told Borya at the time, 'Boris, He's no longer Volodya. Forget it. Look above his head and you'll see an imperial eagle. And you'll see a thousand-year-old empire.' It's not a group of like-minded thinkers who

have infiltrated the Kremlin, as Berezovsky thought, to create a new system in Russia. No, from the moment he [Putin] sat in the [president's] seat, you [Berezovsky] are one of the subjects of the empire. Not a citizen, but a subject."

I asked Dorenko if he thought the system might change in the future, as so many in the West hope. "Of course not," he replied—and not because of Putin. "Putin's not only not to blame, but he's also a victim of the conditions," Dorenko said. "Russia is an empire because it's an empire in our minds," he added. "An empire means a lot of things. The paternalism of the authorities, of course. But it also means such a thing as the Russian word '*pravda*,' which means 'just truth.' What does that mean, 'just truth?' Truth is truth. But 'just truth' is something only Russians have thought up."

Putin, Tao and Television

When Dorenko lost his show last year, he said at the time that he was sacked because he had steadfastly refused to ally himself with Putin. Capitulating would have meant no longer being able to air criticism of the president and his allies. Dorenko also said he'd met with Putin at least four times since September 1999 and that at their last meeting, on August 29, 2000, the president informed Dorenko that he had broken all ties with Berezovsky and asked the ORT anchor for his support. Dorenko turned the president down. He bitterly called the loss of his show a blow against freedom of speech.

When I asked him about the meeting last month, Dorenko elaborated further. "As far as I know, he [Putin] felt wounded because I criticized him. Moreover, I made public some of the things he thought were on a personal level between us. That disappointed him as a human being."

With a half-tone of irony, Dorenko went on to praise Putin for allowing him to continue living and working in Russia. "He could easily, without saying a word, let it be known and I'd be thrown out of work again," he said. "The right to live in Russia is a gift from the authorities. That's the truth. It has to be valued."

Meanwhile, Dorenko continued, Putin feels he has to control the flow of information through television. "The world is virtual—it exists inasmuch as television describes it. He understood that very well. I'm always telling myself that he's a kind of Zen Buddhist or follower of Tao because he really does feel the world is generated by our consciousness and that in politics, the world is generated by television. That's why he feels that if something takes place and no one describes it on television, that means it didn't take place."

Dorenko also said part of the motivation for Putin's

³ Over the years, Berezovsky served as head of the Security Council—an advisory body to the president—as executive secretary of the loose alliance of former Soviet republics called the Commonwealth of Independent States (a post later given to Borodin by Putin), and, as I mentioned, as a deputy in the State Duma.

actions come from a feeling of duty. "He felt a kind of debt in front of the country. But it wasn't in a verbal form—it was like a feeling. He felt that something had to be done for Russia. 'We have to do something for Russia,' he said. I asked him what. He replied that we would tackle the necessities confronting the country. But the country would dictate how—there isn't a formulated position. There's no strategic path."

The former anchorman said Putin the president is molded by several roles. First among them is his function as a westernizer—contrary to popular opinion. In the age-old Russian debate between those who would have Russia more closely resemble the rest of Europe and those Slavophiles who claim the country must follow a path of its own, Putin sides with the former. "Putin is a person of the system, and any such person is essentially a westernizer," Dorenko said. "He isn't an adventurous person. He likes the German system. And that means the American, too. Even if he doesn't admit it. He's like a German tsar in Petersburg 150 to 200 years ago. He is a German from Petersburg."

But in his role as Russia's leader, Dorenko said, Putin—who speaks fluent German and, as a former KGB spy, recruited agents in Dresden, then in East Germany—cannot simply act on his predilection for a more western way of doing things. Rather, he must play out a duality for public consumption. "On the one hand, he has to demonstrate adherence to western order and western structure," Dorenko said. "And on the other, he has to demonstrate a skepticism that says it can't be incorporated in Russia. That's why when you hear 'imperial' rhetoric not directed to the West, it doesn't mean he says the same thing when he drinks tea with [German Chancellor Gerhard] Schröder."

Dorenko feels that if the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington did anything to Putin's public persona, it was to relieve it of some of the need to silence his real bent. "He was always a westernizer. It's just that he felt he couldn't say that in front of his subjects because they wouldn't understand it. Now he sees that they love him and allows himself to step back a little."

Another factor reigning back Putin's western bent is his feeling that average Russians aren't able to function according to western traditions. "Boris [Berezovsky] once told me," Dorenko said, "'I was speaking with Volodya and it turns out that he doesn't believe in his own people—that Russians are able to be a democratic nation. He believes it has to be done slowly, like the Chinese. But I,' Berezovsky said, 'think that they're already able, that there's a class of small property owners who can defend themselves with the help of a democratic structure.'"

Dorenko said he agreed with Berezovsky's assessment. "I also frequently saw in Putin a skepticism—well, he has a German mentality, after all, he's not Oblomov," Dorenko said of Ivan Goncharov's archetypal Russian character of

the 19th-century "superfluous man," over-educated and idealistic, but unable to fill a constructive role in society. "[Putin] looks around himself and he thinks that it's probably too soon, the people are naïve, honest, they need sternness like a child. They need to be rewarded, they need care. That's the kind of people we have. He didn't tell me that, but I saw a kind of irony I could decode. That's a typical traditional view of the people on the part of the Russian ruling élite."

"It's like in Gogol," Dorenko continued, "where peasants tell off nobles for not punishing them for drunkenness. They say, 'You're a bad master because if you'd scolded me, I wouldn't have spent all my money and would be living normally now, feeding my family. But you didn't punish me and I drank away all my money. Now there's no money and that means you're a bad master.'"

Despite his much-touted image as a strong ruler, however, authoritarianism doesn't actually come easy to Putin, Dorenko opined. "The tsar has to be less European," he said. "Yeltsin was a tsar. His character has to be wide, open, spontaneous. He has to execute boyars," Dorenko said of the Russian equivalent of the nobility during the Muscovite period. "The imperial system and the tsar's people are sado-masochistic," he continued. "Between the tsar and the people, there must always be the boyars. Big managers whom the tsar must throw to the outraged masses from his balcony from time to time to tear apart. A minister or prime minister or someone else. That's absolutely necessary. In that lies the logic of the love between the tsar and the people."

Putin, Dorenko said, has trouble taking part in the sado-masochistic ritual, "He should have fired the Navy commander after the sinking of the Kursk," Dorenko added by way of example. "He didn't do that. He pardoned him. But he should have thrown him to the masses to tear apart. He didn't do it because he doesn't know how to be tsar."

Despite the president's deficiencies vis-à-vis his public role, his ratings remain high because of the ongoing myth that Putin is indeed a powerful paternalistic ruler, Dorenko said. "There's a kind of mythical Putin. A fair person, a fair tsar who keeps Putin's ratings up for him. I think he's surprised himself. [Laughing] Seriously. Because it's a kind of magic, it's not clear how it happens."

Finally, according to Dorenko, Putin has a third public role in addition to the ones of westernizer and tsar. It's that of a Taoist monk—something to which he'd alluded to earlier. Eastern philosophies are becoming hip in Moscow, but Putin was ahead of the curve. "He knew it before it became fashionable—a Zen kind of philosophy. He also does judo—not only as a sport, but as a way of life. He follows the logic of Tao—the soft overcomes the hard and so forth."

Dorenko tells of one of his meetings with Putin in the Kremlin just after the arrest of Vladimir Gusinsky in June 2000, a major event evidently orchestrated by the Kremlin but about which Putin didn't publicly comment at the time.

"We went to drink tea in the back room behind his office, the 'rest' room—and when we were leaving, I stopped in the doorway, turned (we had already said goodbye to each other) and said, 'Vladimir Vladimirovich, tell me, are you a Taoist?' He looked at me in silence. I said, 'You resemble a Taoist monk.' He said, 'Why?' I said, 'You allow essences to become real without mixing into them yourself.' And he replied, 'But that's so effective.' So I said to him, 'Yes but some essences can spin out of control.' Then I turned and left. Some of those essences can indeed grow out of control and devour us. I think that's important."

Dorenko Rising Once Again

After being fired from ORT last year, Dorenko vowed to make a comeback. "I will come back now or twenty years or two thousand years from now," he said at the time. An attempt at that comeback is now under way. Last month, Dorenko returned to the air after a year in hiatus with a show dedicated to his "pet issue of investigations into corrupt Moscow bureaucracy." The 90-minute program appeared on the third-tier Moskovia television channel, which shares airtime with the Luzhkov-controlled TV Center.

Moskovia is 56-percent held by subsidiaries of Mezkhombank, which is in turn owned by Sergei Pugachov. Pugachov is believed to have close ties with Pavel Borodin, the former Kremlin property manager and one-time Yeltsin crony who—as I mentioned—was arrested in New York on charges of corruption earlier this year. The remaining shares in the station are owned by the Moscow regional administration, which is loosely aligned with the Kremlin against the Moscow city administration. "I expect to lean on a mutual understanding with Luzhkov in my crusade against corruption in his entourage," Dorenko told journalists shortly after he announced his new program.

The news of Dorenko's return to the airwaves came two weeks after even more startling tidings: Dorenko would run for the Moscow City Duma in December. For that, he was roundly criticized during his Mir Novostei news conference by an excited man who identified himself a political scientist. "Why don't you stick to television? You're just bringing filth to politics!" he spat out.

"I don't have to prove anything on television anymore," Dorenko replied coolly. "I've already done that. It's not creative work anyway," he continued. "Creative work for me is in politics. In any case, I don't even watch television."

At the time, Dorenko told me he wanted to form what he called a "leftist union. I want to approach the creation of a real conservative party that will take the Soviet era into consideration and follow Soviet conservatism without the classicist demagoguery of the Communists. But not bourgeois, of course. I think Russians are simply anti-bourgeois in themselves. They can't be bourgeois. You practically never see a bourgeois Russian. It's a very rare thing.

"It's funny that everyone thinks that communism ex-

isted here," he added. "But it didn't. It existed in 1918 and that's it, then it ended. The marginal peasant masses came to power with their leader Stalin. They created a paternalistic model of slavery. But the demagoguery—the International and so forth—is just nonsense. In my generation, no one believed a word of it. You ask anyone from my generation if any one of us believed in it, and they'll say, 'No!'"

Dorenko criticizes two current and prevalent forms of conservatism in Russia: "A kind of vicious Orthodoxy and nationalism—a very dangerous one in my opinion." He also denounces what he calls a "Latin-Americanization" of the military. "The army is becoming a business structure with large economic interests and a great role in politics. That's very dangerous. That's why I want to clean our Soviet traditionalism from these new dangerous things and show people the possibility of moving forward without getting lost. We don't need to seek other foundations. We have a normal foundation."

Dorenko also berates liberals who call themselves social democrats. "They're modeling themselves on Western European parties," he said. "But westernizers are mistaken. Russia is the only country that copies others. It has no roots, no traditions. In Russia, we have no real parties. We have trains attached to either Luzhkov or Putin."

Why did Dorenko choose the Moscow legislature for a comeback—when many tell him he would surely do better in the federal-level State Duma? "As long as the city remains a feudal system, the rest of the country won't move forward. The élite must be ripped away from the trough and has to realize that it, too, has to live in this country. Otherwise, there won't be a stable system." Dorenko adds that he would be able to do very little as a politician on the federal level.

In a typical Dorenko move, he about-faced in early November, announcing plans to join the Communist Party. "I'm not talking about just joining, but participating in the leadership of the party," he told Interfax news agency. The Communist Party reacted less than enthusiastically. "If he wants to convince us that he is a fervent upholder of the socialist path of development, then we, excuse us, don't believe it," the party's Moscow City committee said in a statement cited by Interfax. A committee representative said Dorenko was most likely just trying to gain publicity. "We advise him to try the LDPR," the press service said, referring to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's high-profile nationalist party.

Sociologist Kagarlitsky dismisses Dorenko's run for the Duma as an event wholly unimportant for politics in the city, let alone the country. "It's Dorenko dealing with his personal problems," Kagarlitsky said. "He has to somehow resurrect his status after it fell. He is going about it in this way. It has nothing to do with politics, the Moscow City Duma or even the State Duma. It's a question of personal life and not politics."

Indem's Korgunyuk agrees. "Dorenko has been a pub-

lic figure for a long time," he said. "He has to remind people of himself regularly. He uses any excuse to do that. Why not create a little PR on [running for the Moscow Duma]?"

Korgunyuk dismisses Dorenko's chance of even being elected. "Realistically, I don't even think he'll put himself on the ballot," Korgunyuk said. "He hasn't a single chance in any of the regions of Moscow. During elections—the elections of 1999 showed this especially—the support of the city administration plays a very large role, support on the part of Luzhkov. That support will never be there. Luzhkov, on top of everything else, is a person who is easily upset and bears grudges. Even if he feels Dorenko can play off him as well as Berezovsky, his nature wouldn't allow it."

A New Boredom

As I've indicated, Dorenko doesn't think the nature of Russia's politics will change. Despite the fact that Putin's current stability is creating popularity, Dorenko feels the country may be heading for further unrest. "After a kind of relative Yeltsinist chaos—when everything was being divided and it wasn't clear what would come tomorrow—people needed stability," Dorenko said. "Because tomorrow, say, your home could have been sold to someone else. You live in a Soviet apartment—it never interested anyone to whom it belonged. Yesterday it was life-long and almost free. And you wake up tomorrow and it turns out it actually belongs to some kind of factory."

"A Soviet person can't understand what happened. It's like wartime," Dorenko said of the past ten years of so-called "transition." "That's why the instinctive search for order on the part of the electorate led people to Primakov. And then to Putin. Here was a person who'd provide predictability. It was very important."

But Dorenko adds that Russia can't stomach such predictability for long. "Russians are very emotionally moved people. And now a moment is coming during which paradigms will be changed. That is, people were sick of Yeltsin's super-emotional unpredictability and elected Putin. But they're already bored. Russia is like a woman—she falls in love easily, often, a little fickle," he said, slipping into a misogynistic type of comparison one hears often from male mouths in Russia. Dorenko cited Andrei Bely's novel *Petersburg* to illustrate his view. "Russia can't remain married to Senator Obliukhov," he said, speaking of the book's old-guard character who demands total order in his life. "Senator Obliukhov's wife leaves for Spain because he's tedious. He has order. Senator Obliukhov moves things and writes it down in his little book. 'Fork, drawer five, northwest.' When he needs to find something, he looks in his notebook—where are his gloves? That's order. It's fantastic. Because Petersburgers aren't Russians. They exist somewhere between Europe and Asia—it's a muddled city. It's a mirage-city. And the wife flees to Spain. With whom? The first person she comes across." (On top of having lived in and admired

Germany, Putin was born and raised in St. Petersburg.)

Dorenko also cites Nikolai Gogol's famous protagonist from *The Overcoat*. "If you look at Akaky Akakievich, he's also not a Russian type. He's a bureaucratic type. But Russia can't be married to Obliukhov or Akaky Akakievich. She's tired of Yeltsin. And now she's with Putin but she's already bored. Today is like yesterday. And tomorrow is like today. What kind of life is that? It's not life! [Laughing] Some kind of movement is needed—something must be done. At least a drinking spree! If there's nothing to do—have a drink!

"I tell this to my acquaintances in the Kremlin," Dorenko added. "'You have an emotionally deprived regime,' I say. 'You have a leader with a deficit of emotions.' But Russia can't simply exist. It has to struggle. It has to overcome its own heightened emotions."

As an example, Dorenko spoke of the decorated Russian Colonel Budannov, on trial for having abducted a Chechen girl from her family before raping and murdering her. The trial was seen by critics of the government as an important sign of whether it would begin to crack down on the heinous atrocities carried out daily by Russian soldiers and officers in the breakaway republic. A wave of popular support for the colonel swept the country as soon as the trial got underway earlier this year. Top army generals, including the commander of forces in Chechnya, said Budannov was a hero and should be pardoned—despite the fact that he admits his guilt.

Budannov's defense says the girl is accused of having been a sniper. Meanwhile, the trial has been temporarily postponed while Budannov undergoes "psychological testing" to decide whether he is fit to stand trial. The prevailing opinion is that he will indeed be let off. "We have to suffer through everything that happened with Colonel Budannov," Dorenko said. "Budannov is us, us incarnate. We wanted to go there [Chechnya] and wage war. And we wanted to kill that sniper-girl."

"But what if she's not a sniper? What if someone were to break into *your* house here in Moscow—a drunk officer—and rape a girl? In *your* apartment. *Your* daughter. There it is. [Pointing to imaginary goosebumps on his arm.] That's what Russians need. They need to suffer. What happened to Budannov is an emotional psychological crisis. Because Budannov is us. We wanted to kill the sniper-girl."

I left Dorenko feeling more awash in paradox than usual in this country. Dorenko articulates the Russian dilemma more persuasively than many, but his words often seem more enlightening as an example of the very paradoxes of which he speaks. He is both an actor in the political system and an observer, and he claims the privileges of both sides. Those lines usually can't be crossed in the West. But in Russia, such movement defines the culture of the political system as well as the politics of cultural perception. □

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Fellows and their Activities

Shelly Renae Browning (March 2001- 2003) • **AUSTRALIA**

A surgeon specializing in ears and hearing, Dr. Browning is studying the approaches of traditional healers among the Aborigines of Australia to hearing loss and ear problems. She won her B.S. in Chemistry at the University of the South, studied physician/patient relationships in China and Australia on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and won her M.D. at Emory University in Atlanta. Before her ICWA fellowship, she was a Fellow in Skull-Base Surgery in Montreal at McGill University's Department of Otolaryngology.

Wendy Call (May 2000 - 2002) • **MEXICO**

A "Healthy Societies" Fellow, Wendy is spending two years in Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec, immersed in contradictory trends: an attempt to industrialize and "develop" land along a proposed Caribbean-to-Pacific containerized railway, and the desire of indigenous peoples to preserve their way of life and some of Mexico's last remaining old-growth forests. With a B.A. in Biology from Oberlin, Wendy has worked as communications coordinator for Grassroots International and national campaign director for Infact, a corporate accountability organization.

Martha Farnelo (April 2001- 2003) • **ARGENTINA**

A Georgetown graduate (major: psychology; minor, Spanish) with a Master's in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, Martha is the Institute's Suzanne Ecke McColl Fellow studying gender issues in Argentina. Married to an Argentine doctoral candidate and mother of a small son, she will be focusing on both genders, which is immensely important in a land of *Italo/Latino machismo*. Martha has been involved with Latin America all her professional life, having worked with Catholic Relief Services and the Inter-American Development Bank in Costa Rica, with Human Rights Watch in Ecuador and the Inter-American Foundation in El Salvador, Uruguay and at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Gregory Feifer (January 2000 - 2002) • **RUSSIA**

With fluent Russian and a Master's from Harvard, Gregory worked in Moscow as political editor for *Agence France-Presse* and the weekly *Russia Journal* in 1998-9. He sees Russia's latest failures at economic and political reform as a continuation of failed attempts at Westernization that began with Peter the Great — failures that a long succession of behind-the-scenes elites have used to run Russia behind a mythic facade of "strong rulers" for centuries. He plans to assess the continuation of these cultural underpinnings of Russian governance in the wake of the Gorbachev/Yeltsin succession.

Curt Gabrielson (December 2000 - 2002) • **EAST TIMOR**

With a Missouri farm background and an MIT degree in physics, Curt is spending two years in East Timor, watching the new nation create an education system of its own out of the ashes of the Indonesian system. Since finishing MIT in 1993, Curt has focused on delivering inexpensive and culturally relevant hands-on science education to minority and low-income students. Based at the Teacher Institute of the Exploratorium in San Francisco, he has worked with youth and teachers in Beijing, Tibet, and the Mexican-American agricultural town of Watsonville, California.

Peter Keller (March 2000 - 2002) • **CHILE**

Public affairs officer at Redwood National Park and a park planner at Yosemite National Park before his fellowship, Peter holds a B.S. in Recreation Resource Management from the University of Montana and a Masters in Environmental Law from the Vermont Law School. As a John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, he is spending two years in Chile and Argentina comparing the operations of parks and forest reserves controlled by the Chilean and Argentine governments to those controlled by private persons and non-governmental organizations.

Leena Khan (April 2001-2003) • **PAKISTAN**

A U.S. lawyer previously focused on immigration law, Leena is looking at the wide-ranging strategies adopted by the women's movement in Pakistan, starting from the earliest days in the nationalist struggle for independence, to present. She is exploring the myths and realities of women living under Muslim laws in Pakistan through women's experiences of identity, religion, law and customs, and the implications on activism. Born in Pakistan and immersed in Persian and Urdu literature by her grandfather, she was raised in the States and holds a B.A. from North Carolina State University and a J.D. from the University of San Diego.

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