

Unsent Letters from Rhodes

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I always wanted to write a book of my impressions of Rhodes, but somehow I could never manage it. I do not know whether it was not having the time or whether it simple not being in the mood to write. In 1997, I devoted two large essays to creation of the “Three Seas Writers and Translators Council” (TSWTC) in Rhodes (Greece) and establishment of the International Rhodes Centre for Writers and Translators. However since then I have not written anything about Rhodes, despite the fact that I go there at least twice a year to work. At least thousand times I intended, even sitting down and starting to write – but nothing resulted. In these eleven years of this blessed island turned to be a place like the homeland for me, and writing impressions of the homeland is immorality, if not the absurd for me.

“Rhodes became the homeland but all the same I cannot write about Rhodes any more”? - this is my first real effort record the eleven years, March 24, 2011 on the Three Seas Writers and Translators International Council letterhead sheet.

However, I am starting to write unsent letters from Rhodes, and I do not send them to anybody; I just collect them in the red folder with two compartments, with the logo of the Center on the cover in Greek and English and inscription Waves of Three Seas – International Writers & Translators Center of Rhodes.

This year we are founding the famous Rhodes writer Nikos Kazdaglis prize and I am designated to Rhodes as a member of the working group. It is already late March and I am working and resting at the same time, and, as soon as there is a free moment making recordings.

I caught the writing passion from the American and German women writers living in my neighborhood in the Center. After they go about food hunting in the morning they then lock themselves up in their rooms and write till evening. The three of us go to a Greek restaurant together for dinner and upon returning they go on writing again.

I came here for other reason, but, unwillingly, unwittingly and step-by-step was become

successfully involved in the festival. Soon we were able to share the fruits of our labor and based on by the number of written papers; I was in the lead. However, I do not speak about quality over quantity. Compared to me they are the well-known, professional writers. And I'd like to begin the Rhodes sketches and by giving an introduction of them.

Letter 1

Anja Tuckerman is a German writer and author of twelve books.

- I have more time now, my son is grown up; he live separately and takes care of himself, - Anja says. She is divorced and for fifteen years has been living with her boyfriend.

I was interested as a typical Georgian mother, how old is the child who lives alone and can take care of himself? He was twenty one. On hearing this I nodded, which means – Of course, it should be this way; it is even a little bit late. But you understand what I thought deep in my heart: She has basically turned the child out of the house into the cruel world, this is what she did! However parents of my generation only would think this way, it's a long time, and as we also have an increased trend of separation of adult "children" eager for independence from the families. The trend continues but the separation of the Georgian "children" from their mothers' skirts still is a difficult and painful process for use to bear.

Jessica Lott is an American writer; 36 years old, lives in Brooklyn, New York City, unmarried. Just now she has come to realize that she wants a child and a husband is needed for this purpose. She is of a traditional family. Her mother is a daughter of Ukrainians who escaped from the Soviet Union during the World War II, but Jessica does not remember, or rather, does not know her mother's Ukrainian name. She even was surprised when I asked about it and started to force her brain to – question and think; I do know but just cannot recollect. Then she remembered that nobody had ever asked her mother's maiden name, and her mother did not ever mention it either. However, as I understood from her talk, there is mostly Ukrainian cuisine recognized in their family: borsch (vegetable soup on a meat bouillon), salo (cured fatback. lard), meatballs, varenyki (dumplings) with sour cream, vegetable "shuba" (vegetable salad with sour fish), etc.

Jessica is a typical American woman. Open-hearted, communicative, polymathic; she studied at several prestigious universities in the US. Now she teaches creative writing (the art of fiction writing) and English literature at one of them. Jessica is easy to communicate with; time quickly passes with her: she is lively, intelligent and full of humor and love of life. Jessica is crazy with wanting to travel to Africa.

- All my serious love stories ended in catastrophe, which was followed by a great despair and frustration. I have collected the best life experience and artistic material. I do not regret it, but I

am grateful for all my disappointments, they supported my novels so much, - she laughs.

- Yes, every cloud has a silver lining, Anja and I agreed.

Anja does not lack for sense of humor either, even more so. Her humor is more European refined. Recently, she has been preoccupied with thinking about the crime of Germans “Nazism” – crimes against humanity and, based on the topic, she is not at all in a joking mood. How could I imagine that in the 21st century, on Rhodes – the God’s place, in the area of the sun and the life, at the ceremony of establishment of Nikos Kazdaglis Prize, a Georgian philologist would have to analyze the crime of the German Nazis against humanity? No, I could never make this stuff up!

Anja received two letters this morning. We are now sitting in the dining room; she is twisting these letters in her hands and suddenly asks me

- Do you have centers like Rhodes in Georgia, for a writer that wants to come and work?

- I reply, “No, there are no such centers but there definitely is a possibility for a foreign writer to come and do their thing in Georgia. If anyone is truly interested, I can think about it and find ways.”

Anja told me that these letters are by a German poet, very talented and once very popular

- Now he is somewhat forgotten, from time to time he picks a country and starts to study it thoroughly. This time he has chosen Georgia and already collected a lot of material; the entire Georgian literature published abroad, and now the only thing left is to step foot on the Georgian land. The poet has been dreaming of it for a long time, he wants to write his actual live impressions about Georgia and Georgians... - Anja says.

- I respond, so what is the obstacle? – I am surprised with her response – Who will refuse to invite home such a man! – I interrupt Anja, but it is not all, the main thing is still to come... what holds him back?

- But he has no phone and has never had one, not to mention a computer and Internet access, the only way of communication which him by post. He writes letters to friends, acquaintances and completely unfamiliar people throughout the world. He writes on the ancient typewriter that is on its last legs, and sends letters out endlessly (I myself am a witness, from the time I arrived, as Anja receives two letters from him every day)...

- I interrupt Anja again... He loves you! –

- If I give him your address, he will send you as many letters, - she scares me, but she does not know that the Georgian mail is much slower than either the German and Greek post. It takes at

least 20 day for a letter to arrive to Georgia. – Just imagine, I came to Rhodes, and when I opened the door of my room, there was a letter on the floor, like it happened in the nineteenth century, the letter was pushed in a chink under the door; a wonderful feeling.

- Perhaps, – I tell her and I think, yes, if these were love letters and not the product of a scribbler, for who does not care about whom he writes, he just writes. And about thirty years ago all Germany pressed his manuscripts to the heart.

- His popularity was followed by a big pause. As in Germany it is impossible to make a living with poetry alone. You have to have a patron (same way in Georgia!), you must have another job on the side. That's why he started working in a metallurgical factory as a worker, polishing steel surfaces. In recent years he made much physical working and a little bit of writing. Then he specialized in what turned into hobby – writing about different countries. Money is not his motivation and he does not make money with this either. But he is very interested in this work. Now, as I told you, he dreams on about Georgia and seeks ways to go there for writing.

One discouraging thought came to mind about bring him to my home in Georgia, as I had already brought once Chris Stead, an American from Oxford, Mississippi. However, Chris was a carpenter, a simple, unpretentious person. And having such a man at home seemed a little bit risky for me, as you never know and what might be spinning in his mind, especially in a place like Georgia, as our land full of surprises. In short, I may not be the one to make a good caregiver for such a man. But if anyone of you, the readers of these records are willing to invite him – no problem; I'll give your address and I guarantee that your mailbox (if you have any) will always be full of letters posted from Germany.

Recently I received the email message from Anja:

Dear Manana,

My assignment to Rhodes comes to the end, I hope you are well, healthy and in good spirits, a poet who writes of nature and poetry of Georgia (I told you about him in Rhodes) says Hello and recollects Vazha-Pshavela (this is what she wrote). Recently he has been in the South Germany, in the city where Grigol Robakidze lived before moving to Switzerland.

The weather is still changeable on Rhodes, it rains, and the house is full of invisible people.

Your Anja.

April 15, 2011, 1:47

P.S.

I talk to Gio Mgeladze at the Literature-Café in Vake. Whenever fits the surrounding so much that I cannot even imagine, what a person can do at this place without him. We speak about Tornike Gurjintakhi, a beginner writer that we both like very much.

- To tell the truth, I am surprised how it could happen that he wrote a six hundred-page novel in the era of digital technology... Who is going to read it?!

Ah, my dear Gio, I have not even heard about that German, who writes more than six hundred letters a day and does not recognize digital devices. So he lives calmly and without a hurry, writes letters on the meaning of universal values for common people, puts them into white envelopes, sticks stamps and sends them to the most inaccessible places of the Earth, where there are still no digital or mechanical devices. Now, thanks to Anja, I am waiting for cards from him, if he sends them in April, I hope I'll get them till September.

Letter 2

I am on Rhodes and cannot recall the name of the writer Burtchuladze. That is Burtchuladze, who played Teimuraz Tsikhistavi in the remake of Mikheil Javakishvili's "Jaqo's Dispossessed" (Jakos Khiznebi), and who is said to very much look like the author.

I saw on TV that the "young" writers of Georgia made something like biennale in Kutaisi before leaving for Rhodes. The audience was so bored that Burtchuladze had to stir up a small incident to wake up the attendants, but this small one turned into to such a scandal that it even made our President angry who himself is especially fond of scandals. In particular, Burtchuladze offered a message without exception to all the Kutaisians who were sitting and standing in the hall, and before starting he shot the Kutaisian phrase – "Welcome to thieves, death to whores!" Half of the audience started up on saying this. Luckily, the people began to leave the hall in protest, but who would have done so many messages, Burtchuladze? I do not think he would manage it. He gladly pointed out: There was a reaction like I expected, i.e., we, the thieves have stayed and they, the whores departed.

In short, some people who heard it were glad in their hearts, some people felt offended and among them – the President of Georgia, who was particularly anxious that some of the artists, deepened in self-admiration did not appreciate his contribution, they did not even take the effort to look around and attach importance to the now renovated Kutaisi. Saakashvili called Burtchuladze and "everyone like him" retards and ungrateful. But Burtchuladze have said whilom "I gave Saakashvili my vote as well as my ass". So who is ungrateful now – the artist or the President?

What else could the writer do – he declared on television – I made a joke, and the minority did not understand it, and the President did a real democrat president should do – he protected the minority.

So who now is a thief and who is the whore whose descendants will now take care of this. If you ask me, writers are worried in vain, Burtchuladze will grow old too, and he too will be share the same fate and be attacked by youngsters, but I cannot say what will the synonym for the word whore at that time to come.

This is the homeland! Were from I started – Rhodes, the German writer, the American one, German poet – admirer of Georgia, and yet, after all, through the Lit-Café I found myself in “MayKutaisi” where, thanks to our reformist law enforcement structures, not a single thief remain; the country is now inundated by whores!

Letter 3

Sandro is also Georgian writer. I learned about his becoming a writer recently, when he appeared as an expert in social media networks on one of the youth- educational programs. Ten years ago, before the Rose Revolution, we worked together in the Non-Governmental Organizations Foundation “Horizon”, I was the head of the Public Outreach Program, and he was the video studio manager, designer and operator of the same program. At that time he was one of the best “IT-guys”, i.e., IT experts in Tbilisi, to be even clearer, he was considered to be the master of telecommunications. Therefore, as all Masters, he consistently and persistently sucked my blood, but I have to admit that in the end he made everything perfectly, and as the Master, I took thorough care to prevent Sandro from being bothered or anxious – the studio and the general public needed him. However, it should be said that my studio somehow contributed to his formation, progress and continued professional development.

All developed as a tale: once, Sandro brought a small that self-made up and self-illustrated book of a special black and white graphic design. There was a very clumsy, worm-like man on the cover who looked very much like the author himself. The book was titled “The story of the sad dick” or something like this. I did not know honestly what to do – either to laugh or take the author’s trouble serious or even to congratulate him with the first book published! In short, I became very anxious, but I realized that this fruit of creativity was self-made, the only copy, i. e. as it is called – exclusive and at least in the nearest future there was prospective of distribution, especially taking into consideration the sense – feelings – possibilities of the main character.

Sandro is tall, very thin and modest young man, the intelligent from head to foot. He has a perfect sense of humor. Indeed, he was in the process of creative search and tried to create his own

literary genre, possessed vast information and sought, tried and examined his talent and ability. Was this genre in the process of being formed, like a good wine, developed as an artist... and I understood it in theory, but only in theory; since that “fateful” day, and because of that book and due to its title, I could not look into the eyes of our colleague Sandro. When I saw him, his sad graphic character came to my mind immediately and I felt ashamed very first of Sandro and then of myself. Luckily, Sandro soon went to study in Italy. We hired a new designer. I have not seen Sandro since.

Time passed. The opposition made the famous “corridor of shame” at the entrance of the Georgian Public Broadcaster. No employee could enter the building of the television without having to pass through this corridor. However, “those needed”, the big fish, somehow still managed to get into the television building bypassing the corridor all together. Now the small-fry would be subjected the flood of mud and dirt, recriminations. So, as I stood there, I saw my former designer coming – thin, tall, very humble but courageous and not afraid at all to pass the corridor. He was stopped and asked for the document, replied with a smile and pulled out a document; the back rows sounded the mocking “uuuuuuuuuuuuuu...” and some exclamations. Despite the fact that no one of the mockers knew who was this man, what was he doing, what was his duty, what was he supposed to decide and whether he was to decide anything in that television state. His ID was twisted for some time and then was returned to him and he passed the way. Sandro was not anxious by any single nerve of his ordeal. He calmly made his way to the entrance.

I stood in the ranks of the opposition at the “corridor of shame” and looked at Sandro with the bag over the shoulder on his way to the entrance of the television building. Again I felt ashamed of him and was very angry with myself for this. Then I burst into laughter unintentionally, I laughed very loudly and no one was surprised, because it was such a mess and fuss about and that no-one could realize who and why were angry or cursing or laughing. The reason of my laughter was that I never have felt ashamed for anybody so many times and so sharply, as for my former co-workers, which, in principle, having no role in my life, lived elsewhere, on another plane, in another world, and wrote stories of “sad dicks” for himself. Funny thing is that thousands of years later, one fine, sunny day, in this beautiful little country me and my old comrade turned to be on the opposite sides of the “corridor of shame” However, both of us were “the children of this little and unfortunate Georgia”!

Letter 4

Zurab Lezhava is a Georgian writer – not young, but he has just come on the scene, more precisely – and recently became popular; he is the author of a number of bestsellers – a former prisoner, who made living by trading at the “Dry Bridge” for years. He had no house and lived at the Dry Bridge in a self-made hut as a hermit, interested neither with the Government nor with the Writers’ Association (intriguing already, is not it?).

Nobody gave the writer possibility to remain aloof as a hermit. The Minister of Culture himself was interested in him: to prevent another fatal mistake of the people of Georgia and not to lose another artist under a staircase like Nikala Pirosmiani, the Minister took special care of him. Excellent, noble approach, but it, as happens, was overdone, eventually some mystical, classical-exotic, avant-gardist, and absurd-realistic artist's icon was made of the hermit writer, and as expected, this discovery of culturology was attributed to the current Georgian Minister of Culture. However, did there exist Zurab Lezhava with his club books? Yes, he did exist, but before the "peer writers" started speaking about him, the Rose Revolution Minister exploited his brains, was on the scene earlier than everyone (As far as I know), and he appointed Lezhava as the head of one of the departments at the Ministry of Culture).

Lezhava tried a lot not to lose his identity and mysterious image, but when the regime needs your icon and your creativity for its own purposes, it is very difficult to resist, even the experience gained during the harsh regime cannot be effectively addressed. I knew nothing about him, neither about his work. I was very angry with myself for my lack of knowledge – how I could have missed out on such a writer. Definitely he a man of my generation, a generation that I know rather generation, which includes writers and others who are generally artistic and scientific; they are part of a larger club that even includes criminal circles.

What is interesting is that Zurab Lezhava was discovered by the Georgia's Minister of Culture, as the alternative to today's and yesterday's dismal (not to say untalented) writers. It appears that he had to go to great lengths to tame him. As a representative sample of Georgia, it was the very story of Zurab Lezhava that was picked for the Anthology of the World Literature, the first and hopefully not the last one. So we are to the point where I said that was very happy that at last the creator, master, the same one who will ultimately crown the lost his 70s generation of behalf of the generation: the biography which is the most suitable for a writer, the name – splendid, works – controversial and scandalous as well; now briefly and fully decorated – a formed and established writer. Is this for the sake of appearance? The topic of appearance is not something to be spoken about here, when there are so many of necessary attributes present, albeit, appearance is also something different, provided you make an effort and then broaden it: genius inherent naivety, confusion, slight naughtiness, significant smile, a little bit bent and swinging like a reed, in short, a typical Nobel prize winner. I am now waiting for his premium speech at some Gala Award Ceremony.

And the speech was given. My apologies, as I did not thoroughly maintain the vocabulary, as I am here on Rhodes/ I do not remember exactly what words were used, but the style and content are maintained:

- Let me thank the Parliament ... for this and that! Let me thank the Ministry of Culture and

personally to Nika Rurua ! Thanks to our father and bread-winner, Zaliko Samadashvili and thanks (no, he did not say the Party and the Government...) to our irrepressible, or insuperable, or courageous; I do not remember what epithet he used from among these three, the President, he said, and thus crowned his premium speech of gratitude.

What was a period of the modern history of Georgia that I have not passed – being a October Children, a member of the Pioneers and then Komsomol ... I am a witness to the fight against the Social Realism of the Georgian 60s representatives and they never witnessed such personal (in mass – yes; I did) and expressed ecstasy even from the most partocratic writers. No, I cannot recollect it, and if there was, let the Minister remind me.

I was watching on TV, how the addressees of this endless gratitude flushed red and bad mannered laughed due to inconvenience, other than the President, who did not attend the Gala award ceremony. Someone told me that he joked and I was calmed. Then I become angry again – I cannot understand jokes well any more. I do not know, it might even be true; we were made to listen and watch such a humor for the last decades that I am not longer able to recognize a real joke. However, someone said that in every joke there is but part joke, the rest of it is the total truth.

P.S. I did not read anything of Zurab Lezhava's yet; I am still on Rhodes, but I eager to go to Georgia and enjoy the pleasure of the first reading. May be each of the above will turn out to be upside down!

Letter 5

“I am a little Georgian and, therefore, the son of the Caucasus Mountains”. But the matter is that the life goes on and the “progress” involved the world that I needed just about ten hours to fly from the Caucasus Mountains to the Himalayas and to cry there from my heart – here I want to die. To say in Shanghai that nothing could make me step in there any more, in Madrid I needed even less time to say – this is my country, go along the path of Christ in Jerusalem and to lose behavior, smoke a pipe at the bank of the Mississippi River with Huckleberry Finn, to be lost in the hurricane and downpour in Pompeii labyrinth, jumping in a tiny boat named “Latvia” on nine-point waves in stormy Gibraltar, waving the flag on Switzerland as part of some anti-globalist action, be at the epicenter of the terrorist attacks in London. I still do not know just how many more misunderstandings I can find myself in and out of – I guess as many as possible.

Now I am on Rhodes, one of the most historically important Greek islands, at the land of one of the world's miracles – Colossus of Rhodes and together with my none Georgian friends work on the establishment of prize of the prominent Rhodes writer Nikos Kazdaglis (yet another misunderstanding, but it's a long story, and another time and separately about it, besides, I have

described the story of my connection with Rhodes in the two long essays in the 90s. Here I would like just to note, that this miracle island emerged in the waters of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas became my safe harbor, when I was turned out from my “own” Heaven on the Black Sea Coast).

What a man took me away with a firm hand – the God in his boundless abundance gave me the opportunity, together with the people, who have come from the different countries of the World to do small good deeds on this God blessed land, at least, plant one olive tree. My house on Rhodes is the Rhodes International Center for Writers and Translators called Waves of Three Seas is located on the beach, on the mountain cliff, in the former palace of the Turkish Pasha and looks over the beach like a beacon.

It is March 2011, wonderful warm, sunny days here. By the way, they do not know here the expression “Crazy March” - March and April are velvet... If we do not consider the overall economic crisis that has hard hit Greece, this is the only place where there still is universal peace and solidarity. As for the crisis, Rhodes inhabitants’ conviction is that it is the result of envy by the rest of the world – “they called us so often that we are in the heaven until they put the evil eye upon us” - they say.

I can see the beach from my window. Today the beach will start to be cleaned. Preparations have begun for the tourist season. I saw one or two men, the brave ones entering the water and enjoying its pure blue freedom. The sea is the calmest today and glitters like a mirror. I can see the reddish stones dispersed in the bottom even from my window. I am in the heaven, where else? And there is no such power, which could force me to bite into an apple and be kicked out from the paradise. Although there is a plenty of other wonderful fruit on Rhodes, and such a wonderful fruit!

Letter 6

“It’s good for the soul and the successors, if you live in plus, it is not good if you are in minus, it is a disaster when you are zero! Flavius” (extract from the Facebook).

Nikko Savas is the most expensive restaurants owner in the “Old Town” of Rhodes, but now he has grown a little bit older and as the “wedding party general” he appears out of his office in the depth of the restaurant only when pursuing cases.

- Let us enter, and if he is there, I’ll just say Hello, - Peter Curman said.

I followed him and we passed a very rich golden laid red wooden corridor with black wooden tables and massive chairs of the same color. There were some enormous mirrors and crystal glasses

sparkling in the light and impressive candle-holders. At the end of the corridor, almost in the dark, an old man sitting by the card table was smoking a cigar. When he saw Peter Curman on the way, he rolled up his eyes, quickly looked at him up and down, giving him the one go over, as if trying to remember him at first sign and smiled politely. It seemed to me that he could not recognize, Peter although he thought this he said I am 'Peter Curman from Sweden.' The host sighed deeply. I am sure he was not fully aware of who he was; it seemed like the version and cheerfully shouted, I recognized you, how could I not recognize you, Petro, Petro, you old chump! And he made a sign to his employees to provide service. Then we were invited to a very nicely decorated table and asked – What will you drink. Peter ordered Ouzo, I ordered Greek coffee. Nikko smiled gently; by now he seemed able to gradually start recalling who was Peter, having spent time with him and sometimes repeated, Oh, Petro, Petro! Then Peter said, "Bambula", and then bursting into hysterical laughter. Nikko, as if he was waiting for this, started telling thousands of fairy tales and real stories one after another, enjoying himself and we enjoyed with him.

- Oh Petro Petro, where have you been till now? I completed two heart surgeries– said Nikko and inhaled such a smoke that I was scared almost to undergo the surgery. Then he twisted the cigar between his fingers and said, what can I do, I am not smart enough to give up smoking.

The waiters served us and Nikko smiled then with squinted eyes and recalled stories of mountains and plains. It turned out that during the good times, Levis came to Rhodes and walked in the Old Town. He liked Nikko's restaurant, and said he wanted to have dinner here to his bodyguards. They immediately burst in into the restaurant, looked over the place, ordered the administrator – "Mr. Levis is going to have dinner here and get the place prepared." Administrators in panic ran to Nikko, and reported Levis is visiting us and please go and meet him.

- Poor administrator! He was so confused, he could not even think. He forgot that I was the captain of this ship, Nikko Salas, had made a big mistake, poor thing; I do not remember where I have the blue jeans of that Levis, on which of my attics! – Then he told about Onassis:

- He was very smart, but egoist, and was not satisfied with what Big Papa (tracked his finger to the sky) gave him. He filled his head with numbers. He asked God one and many zeros after it and the God gave it to him. Gave him some time, and when the time came to settle it, he added several more zeros to the new demand. The God said, let it be yours but I'll cut a number. And he cut one and just many zeros were left. And zero is zero, even if you have a million of them, - said Nikko and showed us zero with the index finger and the thumb.

- Onassis had nothing left, neither son nor daughter, nor Kennedy's wife. He told Americans, I am going to make my son the President of America and Americans will be responsible for making what happens to him afterwards.

This very smart business had not enough brains, he wanted to reign over the world, wanted too much, sacrificed everything for the popularity. We do not like it, popularity brought nothing good to anybody, it is nothing – zero! I love embezzling money; I cannot stand the ciphers, Big Papa (index finger up again) knows! It will be the way he decides! Papa does not like the slaves of the ciphers, you should follow the voice of the heart and the mind will not betray you.

In short, our Nikko became a real Aristotle in the age of seventy years, sits there and full with experience, now has time for the God and philosophy. He can give a master class on the questions of life to a stranger or a businessmen who has lost his way.

- Oh, Petro, Petro, I remember Bambula, how can I forget? He added at last, where is you Bambula, where is old Rhodes... - he sighed, and inhaled deeply to burst my heart. Bambula turned to be the restaurant in the sea, with the drinks, bazooka and “nymphs”. - Young people do not care of anything except ciphers. Money! Money is nothing, zero! He was saying and looking through zero made of his fingers.

Letter 7

Lika, I cannot tell you what kind of a journalist she is but she is successful and almost respected by the Government and its international partner organizations. It is true that she knows everything about journalism. She is especially good in the theory of journalism and what is particularly important in today’s journalism – its “management and administration”.

Lika’s writing and speaking style is relevant for the field; however, she does not appreciate the active and practical forms of the art.

She is extremely “honest” and law-abiding, and in proving it, please allow me to share with you a small introduction and some humble comments, including real facts:

I do not know exactly what motivated me to remember Georgian journalism or its apologist, Lika, with her honesty law-abiding self, in the cradle of civilization, on Rhodes, in this personified paradise? Nonetheless, what can I do you if it happened here, a venue where the thought boundaries are indefinite, the mind blessed with enjoyment and which at times sometimes throws you into a state of undesirable judgment and even more undesirable memoirs?

After this prelude you surely have guessed that there is a large gap between Lika and me. She is the ideal product of the today’s reality and especially close to the mentality of the ruling class, thoroughly knowing and executing its policy; she is more or less a person of principle,

necessarily untalented and if needed – even immoral. Such people are also much appreciated by the international organizations and the “experts” thereof, who are not well familiar with the local circumstances.

Lika, is not a single person for me, she is a collective noun and represents the caste, which emerged in the bosom of the NGO civil sector of Georgia in of the 90s, developed, rapidly reproduced and strengthened.

It happened that this collective “Lika” managed to leave her mark along with the various current events on the different stages of my life. And since this image is still topical and current in our reality, it is very hard to ignore and delete her out of my life.

To make it short, Lika, with her modest smile and the best regards once almost made me lose my job, but attentive colleagues and hot-hearted NGO personnel revealed her “naive” mistake and made it a subject for public review. For the second time she almost made me arrested (with the same modest smile and the best regards). This story is so original that it is really worthwhile telling:

One day I was called from the United Nations Office for Democratic Development (this organization published a book with my authorship on the media development issues in Georgia, titled: “We live in the age of information”) and they asked me to temporarily stop the distribution my book. What’s going on, I asked and they said, the international organization ITRAK employee reported that the questionnaire used in your book belongs to them and you illegally used it. Suddenly I did not understand what program or what misappropriated questionnaire they were talking about, because I could imagine misappropriation of anything in this strange society, but the questionnaire? No, I could not; I asked the person who notified me again of what this was about; please repeat who is complaining and what the complaint is about. They repeated and added that I had presented the book to that person with the commemorative inscription. (Do not ask me the contents of the inscription, I do not remember, and even if I did, I would not recollect it, as I am ashamed). This complainant was neither more nor less any other than the above-mentioned Lika.

The point is that years ago, I was invited by ITRAK to take part in the survey to establish the index of media development and a questionnaire was provided to me and other participants working on it. I collected a large amount of material that I passed to ITRAK as agreed; a year later I wrote a book on the processes reflecting the development of the newest Georgian media based on this material and using the same questionnaire. United Nations funding was obtained for this book and many copies were published in Georgian and English languages.

More importantly, in the foreword of the book I stressed that the publication used the International Organization ITRAK questionnaire.

The UN Office and the publishing house stopped distribution of the book until the case was settled. The ITRAK lawyer contacted me to clarify the issue. The case took on the criminal twist, but fortunately, they read it thoroughly, asked around, made sure, and in some days the book distribution went on. I escaped being arrested and the ITRAK lawyer gave me some professional advice – before you give away a book as a present make inscription on the title page, think a hundred times!

After this story, by the way, one of the Itrack lead employees was proved to be have been involved in bribery and he was imprisoned for 8 years.

I know! I remember one of my friends in his hall of residence in Moscow entertained his roommate with khatchapuri that his mother had sent him and the roommate told the administration – his parents are teachers and where from do they have such opportunities?

Since then I have many times met this Lika on journalism competitions (at least as a member of the jury), or photo exhibitions, or conferences, and she smiled to me with a humble, modest smile, as if nothing happened between us. As the Americans would say: nothing personal – just business! – She smiled and sometimes asked about my family. Once I heard on TV that she was elected as a member of the renewed Board of the Public Television at the time when the “dogs” were turned out and the “cats” were made to bark. A few months ago I saw her on TV. She was speaking about one of the ITRAK media projects. ITRAK has now appointed the irreplaceable Lika as the director of the project.

P.S. ITRAK is the invented name. No, but why did I remember Georgian media and its supporters in the middle of Europe, the cradle of civilization, on this beautiful spring day? How can I understand? Such is a human nature, ungrateful, the devil comes, and then... Come along; time to get out of Paradise!