



**A special edition in association with Amnesty International UK (AIUK) focused on the promotion and protection of human rights in Russia**

# Justice for All

**A**mnesty International's *Justice for All in Russia Campaign* was launched with the *Denial of Justice* report on 30 October 2002 and formally ran until the end of December 2003. *Denial of Justice* noted Russia's human rights (HR) obligations and highlighted areas of concern for the campaign to tackle, including a significant element on Chechnya. It was agreed that, despite the content of our reports, a positive, non-accusatory tone was particularly appropriate in the UK, where a unique annual HR dialogue exists between the UK government, via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and Russian counterparts. The campaign set out to acknowledge this relationship, recognise reforms in Russia, support the work of Amnesty's Moscow office and, initially at least, to avoid an emphasis on Chechnya which risked immediately overshadowing the other issues being raised.

The second main goal of Amnesty's campaign was to strengthen the HR community in the Russian Federation in their work towards ending the climate of impunity for HR violations. To promote our messages that Amnesty International is not just a western organisation and that we campaign on all countries, we needed to engage with a wide group of HR activists as well as government officials in Russia. This was mainly done via the Moscow office. AIUK ran training, and a poster competition for young people in the UK and Russia: these resulted in some useful experiences

and materials that benefited both Amnesty's work and the HR work of Russian colleagues.

The importance of improving communication between different agencies in the UK emerged gradually as the campaign progressed. We developed contacts with various people and agencies in the UK, at European level, within UK diplomatic circles, academic organisations and the police and, of course, via NGOs in Russia. It was obvious that much good work was already being done, but the necessary connections were often not being made. Neither was there a consistent forum to enable such communication to take place. A number of ideas were discussed that might address this: a newsletter (perhaps Internet-based); an online database facility containing details of projects receiving funding, the sources of that financial investment and criteria for achieving it; and the possibility of holding a meeting to discuss with interested parties how such ideas might be put into practice. Fortunately, the FCO proved extremely supportive and offered to host a conference to help launch the discussion.

The objectives of this unique event would be: to bring together the expertise of NGOs working on HR projects in Russia; to highlight any gaps that could be addressed; to identify the main obstacles to success facing projects and some possible actions to tackle these; and to look

*by Becky Hess*

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## THE FCO-AIUK NGO CONFERENCE: SETTING THE SCENE

for opportunities for policy or practice change in Russia that the FCO could possibly support.

Amnesty International UK would like to thank the FCO for their continued interest and support for HR work in Russia, and we remain keen to develop

contacts with UK and other agencies that might further this important activity.

**Becky Hess, Amnesty International UK's Russia Campaign Manager**

# FCO-AIUK NGO Conference

*by Helen Atherton  
Amnesty International UK*

**O**n 4 March 2004, representatives of over 55 NGOs from the UK, Russia and other European countries gathered in the Locarno rooms at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to discuss human rights (HR) issues in the Russian Federation. They were not there at the bidding of the Russian or British governments but of their own interest. They came to discuss each other's work, to examine issues and examples of best practice in the HR field, to propose ideas for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of work in Russia and to make recommendations to the FCO about the best use of diplomacy and funds in Russia.

The day began with an overview of the current HR situation in the Russian Federation. Sergei Nikitin from Amnesty International Moscow gave the opening speech, and was followed by Yuri Dzhibladze, a member of Ella Pamfilova's Presidential Commission for Human Rights, and Jon Benjamin, Head of the Human Rights Department at the FCO. All three highlighted major HR concerns in Russia, detailing the many problems currently being tackled and outlining priorities for all involved in HR work in Russia at the beginning of Putin's second presidential term.

The issues raised by the speakers were then taken as the main themes for the discussion groups that followed: torture/pre-trial detention; prison conditions; TB/AIDS; women's rights; children's rights; freedom of expression; Chechnya/internally displaced persons (IDPs); religious rights and racism and xenophobia. The questions they were asked to discuss, and the main points raised in these discussions, are outlined below.

**How can we develop more effective ways for NGOs/agencies to work together to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of UK-funded HR projects in Russia?**

- NGOs and official bodies in Britain and Russia need to find common agendas with overlapping aims and objectives.
- More resources (e.g. monitoring, translations and training) could be shared to avoid duplication.
- INGOs should maintain and increase close working contacts with Russian NGOs so that they are accurately informed of domestic concerns and are able to convey them clearly at international and regional levels.
- Multi-agency projects with strong local input from the very beginning, especially from the local authorities, stand the greatest chance of achieving genuine sustainability.
- Channels need to be developed for professionals to talk to and work with other professionals.
- Agreed evaluation indicators must be built into the project from the very beginning so that impact can be adequately assessed.
- The legal framework to support positive change must be in place or be put in place.
- Networks of NGOs with similar concerns should be formed in the UK and Russia.
- Mechanisms need to be developed to make small country-wide NGOs aware of good practices developed by other NGOs.

**What are the main obstacles and opportunities in each area of NGO activity?**

**Obstacles:**

- HR is a marginalised issue in Russia, and few coherent strategies have been developed.

## SETTING THE SCENE

- NGOs are distrusted by the public and authorities, and lack both financial and human resources.
- Bureaucracy and officialdom raise difficulties, as do the lack of security and access to volatile regions.
- Contrasting cultures and attitudes exist between UK and Russian NGOs.
- There is a lack of movement of information (horizontally and vertically).

### **Opportunities:**

- Russia has signed a variety of European and international conventions and is anxious not to be seen to be breaking the rules.
- Affluent Russians are increasingly concerned to demonstrate their social responsibility, for instance by supporting charitable work.
- The FCO Global Opportunities Fund in its Emerging Markets Programme makes some provision for support to HR-related projects.

### **How might UK diplomacy and/or funds be put to best use in each area?**

#### **General recommendations for UK funding:**

- HR NGOs in Russia are still heavily dependent on financial underpinning from outside the country. Support for small projects is vital.
- Donors need to be flexible in terms of the length, size and type of projects they support.
- Comprehensive and holistic HR training and capacity building of Russian NGOs are needed.

#### **General recommendations for UK diplomacy:**

- The UK government should exert its influence on EU and other governments to put pressure on Russia to publicly condemn HR abuses. Given the scale and nature of these, particularly in Chechnya, and the Russian government's relative success in playing them down, international condemnation is imperative.
- Greater inclusion of Russian NGOs by international bodies would increase their status and promote co-operation.

The day ended with many fresh working relationships having been forged. This conference will undoubtedly pave the way for continued interaction between governmental institutions and NGOs and, we hope, influence a better allocation of resources in the future.

This special edition of The BEARR Newsletter is dedicated to the efforts of both Russian and UK NGOs working in Russia to further a variety of human rights causes. On the one hand, it looks back on Amnesty International's 'Justice for All in Russia' campaign (2002-2003), which sought to further empower Russia's human rights community by encouraging greater sharing of resources and expertise across the voluntary and governmental sectors in both countries. On the other hand, it provides an opportunity to look ahead to

the work of NGOs and grant-makers alike as they seek to promote human rights issues often in the most adverse circumstances.

The BEARR Trust would particularly like to thank Becky Hess, AIUK Russia Campaign Manager, for her commitment to bringing together the wide range of perspectives on this topic that are expressed in this issue. Congratulations to Becky too, on the arrival of her baby girl Jessica!

## Looking forward to ...

Friday 19 November 2004 at the Charity Centre, London

# The BEARR Trust Annual Conference 2004

## **'Successes and Failures in Promoting Change: Health, Social Care and Human Rights Projects in Russia and the Region'.**

With government and other grants dwindling for work in Russia and the Region, The BEARR Trust Annual Conference this year takes a critical overview of European and Russian NGO health, social care and human rights projects past and present to see what lessons can be learned for the future.

EDITORIAL

# From philanthropy to human rights

*by Daryl Hardman,  
Director, The BEARR Trust*

The development of The BEARR Trust over the years is a lively illustration of the progression in thinking and attitudes in the third sector. Indeed, the managers of what used to be known as 'charitable projects' now find themselves engaged in government lobbying, changing societies' attitudes and furthering the basic rights of human beings.

## Know how transfer in the '90s

Founded in 1991 as a humanitarian aid project taking much needed goods in lorries to the people of Chelyabinsk, The BEARR Trust (British Emergency Action to Russia and the Republics) owes its name to its early humanitarian philosophy. Times rapidly changed, and with them BEARR. During the heady

Faced, at the turn of the new century, with the changing geographic and strategic priorities of governments and big funders, western NGOs started wringing their hands in anxiety over the future of their regional partners: have we created a dependency on western funds that we can no longer satisfy? Will jobs and livelihoods be at risk?

have created something far more precious, of which we can be justly proud: this is the enduring awareness in society, in Russia and the Republics, that protection of children from abuse, access to education for the disabled, integration into society of the marginalised and vulnerable, care of the elderly (to name but some) are not optional extras: they are the basic rights of human beings. These issues cannot now be swept under the carpet as they would have been in Soviet times. They have surfaced, been published and publicly discussed, and projects addressing them exist. Furthermore, the more successful projects now have the ear of the legislators.

## Solving problems together

An illustration of the turning point in Russian attitudes was provided by an exchange at BEARR's recent seminar in St Petersburg, 'Multi-Agency Care of the Elderly'. A Russian delegate asked for a standard formula to use when turning away elderly applicants for services: her agency was inundated with enquiries. Vera Lebedeva of the Moscow Red Cross explained that care workers exist not to deny people services, but to solve problems. Therein lies a vital switch in thinking. When

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Photo: courtesy Daryl Hardman

Psychological support group for young people in Pervouralsk

1990s, numerous British, European, US government and private funds sprang up, encouraging us to transfer western NGO health and social care know-how to the former Soviet Union. The sector expanded.

## Human rights move centre stage

The answer is twofold: inevitably, some jobs and livelihoods are going to disappear as the sector adjusts to the new reality. However, in parallel we

# Racism and intolerance on the rise

by *Ebony Riddell*

**O**n 11 February 2004, a nine-year-old Tajik girl was stabbed to death in St Petersburg in front of her father and young cousin. A gang of youths – reportedly shouting racist slogans such as ‘Russia for Russians’ – are believed to be behind the attack. The murder of Khursheda Sultanova has sent shock waves through the city and other parts of the Russian Federation.

Unfortunately, her murder was by no means an isolated event. Since the fatal assault on Khursheda Sultanova, similar alleged racially-motivated attacks have resulted in the reported deaths of an Afghan doctor in Moscow, a student from Guinea Bissau in Voronezh, a Syrian who was allegedly pushed in front of a train, and a Tajik in Volgograd.

As part of Amnesty International’s year-long campaign on human rights in the Russian Federation, significant research and campaigning was carried out into the issue of discrimination on the grounds of race. Racism within Russian society is manifested in many different ways: through the discriminatory application of laws governing citizenship and permanent residency rights; through prejudiced policing and ill-treatment of ethnic minority detainees; through the harsh residence registration regime – commonly known as ‘propiska’ – which prevents certain minority groups from moving and residing freely; and through the behaviour of intolerant non-state actors who perpetrate attacks against members of ethnic and national minority communities. Amnesty International’s work to combat racism in Russia is ongoing, and the organisation considers the alarming and unchallenged rise of the latter manifestation a serious cause for concern.



Meskhethian families on hunger strike to protest against denial of citizenship to Meskhethians in Krasnodar Territory, June 2002

copyright: 'School of Peace'

Ethnic Chechens and other people from the Caucasus are frequently the victims of negative stereotyping, discriminatory treatment and violence – in particular following bomb attacks or other serious incidents such as the Melnikov theatre siege in October 2002. Other ethnic groups such as Roma, people from Central Asia, Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East also experience racism on a daily basis, in particular in dealings with agents of the state. Attacks on Jewish cultural centres and places of worship are also a regular occurrence.

## State inaction on racist crime

Amnesty International considers that the government of the Russian Federation is failing to protect minority groups from violent, racially-motivated assaults. Law enforcement officials frequently blame attacks, which show clear signs of racial motivation, on young children or teenagers engaged in ‘petty hooliganism’. Members of the ever-burgeoning Russian skinhead movement are usually the perpetrators of race hate crimes of this nature. According to recent figures compiled by sociologist Aleksandr Tarasov, author of the report ‘Nazi

## RACISM

Skinheads in Modern Russia', the number of 'skinheads' is estimated to be around 50,000 and rising, across 85 cities in the Russian Federation.

In Russia, discrimination in the law and administration of justice has created a climate of impunity – perpetrators of racially-motivated crimes are rarely held to account for their actions. This has created a situation in which both the police and members of the public feel they can get away with racist crimes, while racial minorities feel unprotected by the state and vulnerable to attack. In many cases, victims do not report such abuses for fear of reprisals and due to lack of confidence in the justice system.

### Amnesty's appeal to Russian officialdom

Amnesty International has been calling upon the Russian government to send out a clear and unequivocal message, denouncing perpetrators of ethnically-motivated crimes and promoting diversity and respect for difference. Such messages must be accompanied by a resolute political will to effect change – through the prompt, impartial and thorough investigation of all crimes committed on

grounds of race, recognition of the motivation behind the crime in charges against perpetrators, and adequate redress for victims. Comprehensive training programmes to ensure that public officials

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**'Putin has said that everyone should feel at home here and that is of course welcome. But we want to feel safe, not at home.'** – Petrus Indongo, General Secretary of the Association of African Students and the Russian University of People's Friendship, Moscow.

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– in particular those working in law enforcement, immigration, security and the administration of justice – do not themselves act in a discriminatory way is also essential to ensure equal protection for minority groups. All state officials have an obligation to protect all people in the Russian Federation from racism and discrimination and they, including those at the highest levels, should be held accountable for failing to do so.

For more information, log on to: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

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## Editorial: From philanthropy to human rights

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an agency cannot itself provide the necessary help, it should involve others. This is 'joined-up thinking' based on the human right of access to services.

Elizaveta Dzhirikova, head of the Moscow NGO 'Sostradanie', which provides a volunteer-based service caring for the elderly in the community, summed it up by saying, 'Bureaucrats talk in terms of millions of pensioners and thousands of social care workers, but what we see are individuals, each with his or her own particular needs.' 'Sostradanie' has developed a highly successful care

centre that not only serves the elderly but employs them. Their starting premise is to ask of the elderly what is uppermost in their minds, what services they would like. Younger, well-meaning folk might think that older people want meals on wheels, for example, when what they would really like is to have bus stops placed more conveniently so that they can go to the shops themselves for food.

As BEARR has developed from 'philanthropy' to defending the human rights of those sections of the population least able, in

current conditions, to do so for themselves, it has provided a mirror of changing third sector attitudes both in the West and in the former Soviet Union. Defending human rights is no longer seen only in terms of prisons and political repression (although, of course, these issues continue, sadly, to be with us), but in the light of your right and mine to have access to the services we need in order to live our lives in true human dignity with the possibility of reaching our full human potential.

The BEARR Trust endeavours to include as wide a debate as possible in the Newsletter to capture the diversity of NGO work in the UK and Russia and a range of opinions. However, The BEARR Trust cannot be held responsible for the views expressed by authors in their articles.

# Discrimination in education

by Lidia Loukinykh

Lidia Loukinykh, BEARR's project partner on the Health & Social Care Partnerships project 'Opening School Doors to Deaf Children in Nizhny Novgorod', discusses the opportunities for education available to children with special needs in Russia, and highlights their right to share more fully in the life and community of mainstream schools.

They say: 'Nothing gets better with neglect'. Very true, as far as education for disabled children in Russia is concerned. What we see now are the leftovers from the Soviet system, in which the dominating principles were excess human resources and disrespect for the rights of the individual. The only way to educate a disabled child then was to place him or her in a specialised institution, providing room, board and the necessary assistance, but keeping children, from 3 to 18 years old, away from their parents and society. This system, in effect, ruined family relationships and prevented any links with healthy peers. Not only that, it 'spared' the child the opportunity of communicating with the world, and gaining higher education and career prospects. From specialised closed kindergartens disabled children floated to closed secondary schools, to closed vocational schools and then to closed state enterprises for the disabled – ever excluded, ever a burden to the state budget.

Sadly, this system still prevails. It is a system that is necessary for those children whose parents are

themselves disabled, or belong to other categories of the socially disadvantaged who cannot provide the right treatment for their children. However, in the modern world, for those parents who want their disabled children to stay in the family, to have a good education and prospects in life, and who can take full responsibility for their upbringing and education, there is an alternative approach. That is integrating disabled children in mainstream schools. Here they have equal access to high-quality education as their peers. This approach, though declared in resolutions, has barely been implemented in Russia as yet. Why? Because schools are not ready to accept disabled children (owing to a combined lack of trained personnel, equipment and resources). Also, parents do not know such an option exists, and the legal grounds are insufficient to adopt such a model in education.

## Nordis teams up with BEARR

There are ways to solve the problem, of course: to inform parents of their right to make the choice and of the existence of other alternatives, to promote legislative changes, so that integrated education becomes a state policy, to train teachers and prepare children for mainstream school. This process has begun in the Nizhny Novgorod region already, through the joint Russian-British partnership between 'Nordis' (NGO/primary school) and The BEARR Trust. As part of this project, the first steps have been made to prepare Russian teachers of mainstream schools to work with hearing-impaired children.

Far away from Russia as it may seem, Britain has valuable experience to share with Russians in the sphere of social welfare and education for the disabled. The problems are not that different after all and the aims are very similar too. The project began with a general reciprocal overview of the

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social services available in both countries; Nizhny Novgorod region in Russia and Lincolnshire in the UK providing the target areas for research. After an exchange of visits, Russian and UK partners have worked out a plan of cooperation: to conduct a series of seminars and develop corresponding resource materials based on UK experience of educating mainstream teachers about deafness and how to help the hearing-impaired child in class. 'Nordis' is the ideal place for the project as it is the only school in Russia providing specialised assistance to deaf children to develop speech communication, and the only 'alternative' source of information on deafness and the deaf of any kind. That is why we also hope to start a Resource Centre, open and accessible to everyone concerned about deafness, with materials on the medical, social, educational and other resources available to hearing-impaired children, their parents and specialists who work with them.

### **'A school for the deaf? Never heard of that!'**

There are difficulties, of course, as the old system is reluctant to change and there is not yet enough support from municipal, regional or federal authorities. A school for the deaf that is not a closed institution has never been heard of. As a result, 'Nordis' school struggles to cover its own expenses without placing too great a financial burden on the parents of disabled children.

The good news is that increasing numbers of parents in the Nizhny Novgorod region are daring to take their hearing-impaired children to mainstream schools every year. When I look into the happy eyes of those children, when I meet them in university corridors occasionally, I feel relieved and encouraged to continue the work. No longer prisoners. No longer neglected.

# Policing human rights in Russia

*by Detective Chief Inspector Mike Kellett*

**E**arly in 2002, at the end of a secondment from Lancashire Constabulary to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) in Strasbourg, I was approached by Council of Europe staff and asked if I would like to move over to the Police and Human Rights Programme to run their new project in Russia. Having built up some knowledge of the Russian militia and of the human rights situation in Russia and having taken part, in 2001, in a CPT visit inspecting police stations, SIZOs (remand prisons) and prison colonies in Moscow and the Russian Far East, I was under no illusion about the daunting nature of the job.

### **The task of policing**

The project 'Protecting and Respecting Human Rights - The Main Task of Policing' was funded by the Irish Government with additional money from the British Government. The title, though lengthy, reflects accurately the essence of the project. Many people think that the only thing some police officers know about human rights is how to breach them. But policing is all about protecting everyone's human rights, victims' as well as suspects'.

My first task, in May 2002, was to go to Moscow to meet Colonel Ivan Shushkevich at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and begin long and arduous negotiations about the detail of

the project. These discussions were to last until the following January and required several more trips before final agreement was reached. It is a truism that Russian bureaucracy is exhausting and baffling and I admit to wondering sometimes if we were ever going to get things off the ground. But at the same time I understood that the militia is an enormous organisation with 800,000 people policing a population of 147 million. Quite understandably, things do not always happen as quickly as we would like.

### **A practical approach**

It did not take long to agree on the themes of the project: domestic violence, hate crime and the inter-



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viewing of suspects. It was also quickly decided that the focus would be on improving professional skills rather than teaching human rights theory. Teaching an investigator how to interview suspects properly will have a more profound and lasting impact on his behaviour than merely telling him that the European Convention on Human Rights states that he must not torture them. He already knows that! The goal is not to remind people of what they already know but rather to change attitudes and behaviour.

The project finally got under way in June 2003 with a course at the Saratov Militia Academy on domestic violence and how to deal with it. Additional UK input was

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Recent figures suggest that 12,500 women die each year in Russia as a result of domestic violence.

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provided by DCI Sue Williams from the Metropolitan Police Diversity Directorate who led discussions on victim-centred and partnership approaches to investigating violence within families. Students were impressed by the British concept of Domestic Violence Units and Sue has remained in touch with a number of them. Since that first event in Saratov, monthly courses have taken place in six other cities.

### Next steps

Funding is guaranteed until the end of 2004, after which the position is uncertain. Ultimately, the goal is for Russians to continue on their own but they are going to need to exchange knowledge and experience with overseas officers in these fields for some time yet.

As to the effect the project is having, this is perhaps best illustrated by an anecdote from a visit I made to the Saratov Academy in December 2002. I had just finished addressing a class of cadets when several of them asked to speak with me in private.

They told me that they agreed with everything I had said about human rights and the role of police in democratic societies but asked if I realised the pressures they would face to conform to the prevailing culture of the militia once they had graduated. Strangely, I found this encounter a cause for optimism. These young men and

women are exposed to outside influences that their more senior colleagues, brought up under the Soviet system, never were. They have ideals and want to live and work in a society that reflects those ideals. Besides, culture cannot be changed overnight, especially in Russia where patience is a virtue.

DCI Mike Kellett (left) with Lieutenant General of Militia, Pavel Petrovich Salnikov at Saratov Militia Headquarters, November 2002

Photo: courtesy Mike Kellett

### – CONTACT –

The Police and Human Rights Programme's website is at [www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Police/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Police/)  
email: [Michael.Kellett@lancashire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Michael.Kellett@lancashire.pnn.police.uk)

### Coming up at BEARR ...

#### Monday 21 June at 6.15pm

Launch of Simon Sebag Montefiore's 'Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar' in paperback, and lecture, chaired by Professor Robert Service of St Antony's College, Oxford. Event to be held at the Franklin Wilkins Building, King's College, 150 Stamford Street, London SE1 (just off the roundabout at Waterloo).

#### Friday 15 October

The Konevets Quartet will perform for BEARR in a concert at Pembroke College, Oxford.

Contact the BEARR office on 0207 840 0304 for details of these events.

**AI RUSSIA: JUSTICE FOR ALL**

# Amnesty International: an outpost in Russia

**A**mnesty International's Russia Resource Centre (RRC) was opened in January 2003 to coincide with the launch of the 'Justice for All' campaign. By the summer of 2003, a team of six full and part-time employees had been recruited.

One of our main goals was to support the ongoing Russia campaign. We also sought to strengthen the campaigning capacity of AI's Russian membership and local NGOs. Although AI groups and individual members have been active in Russia for a decade it was a novelty that resources could come direct from Moscow, rather than from the International Secretariat in London.

Activities over the past year testify to some significant achievements. Staff members led the way by organising street actions\* in Moscow and encouraging AI groups to hold actions locally. We held similar events for the Action on the Justice Report in the context of the Russia campaign, on Turkmenistan and against the death penalty in Uzbekistan. We also delivered 16,000 postcards to President Putin, collected during a bus tour organised by the Swiss section of AI. These activities were all well covered by the press and posted on the Russian language website.

In fact, over the course of the Russia campaign, press coverage

of AI concerns increased substantially. This was due, in part, to the work of the Russia campaign press office, but staff presence in Moscow was also an important factor. The RRC established good relations with journalists interested in Russia and the CIS and is increasingly a point of contact for journalists who approach the press officer for comments on events not only in Russia but also worldwide.

The RRC also built up important relationships with NGOs, with whom staff members attend regular events. This has ensured that AI plays an active role in Moscow's NGO community. Another important aspect of this work has been to enhance the campaigning capacity of local NGOs and AI groups in Russia. Campaign training was held in September 2003 and successfully encouraged groups to take part in an event for the Justice Report. Groups in Vladimir, Rostov on Don, Tomsk and Sosnovoborsk (Penza Oblast) collected a total of 3,800 signatures for a petition to the President on the plight of mentally disabled children in Russian children's homes. AI group coordinators received training in January 2004, and again in March. As a result, AI activists in Russia acquired valuable new skills and learnt how to participate more effectively in international campaigns.

*by Sergei Nikitin*

In October 2004 staff members visited universities in Pyatigorsk, Samara, Moscow and St Petersburg, accompanied by the British lawyer Bill Bowring (see article p.14) to raise awareness of AI's international vision and mission in the Russian Federation. These trips encouraged students to participate. We were particularly pleased that in Samara we had a chance to give talks to 250 militia cadets at the local police training college. Staff members also travelled to Kazan, Izhevsk, Yoshkar-Ola, Pskov, Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk to give talks to local students and NGOs.

Our plans for the coming year are ambitious. We aim to mobilise more young people at school and university to work on human rights causes and will use the RRC to outreach to teachers, thereby expanding the Human Rights Education (HRE) network and increasing integration with other AI HRE projects in Russia.

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\* 'action' refers to a variety of campaigning activity which AI regularly stages to draw attention to an issue, generate interest and increase pressure for change.

**Sergei Nikitin is Director of Amnesty International's Russia Resource Centre**

# Speaking out on behalf of funders

Mary McAuley, Head of the Ford Foundation Moscow Office from 1996-2002, describes the challenging task facing those who seek to fund and strengthen the human rights community in Russia.

by Mary McAuley

The post that arrives each day on the desk of the Human Rights Program Officer at the Ford Foundation's Moscow office is plentiful and varied. Brief letters, bulky applications (surely a lengthy exposition with photographs will be more convincing than a two-page letter?) may be followed by telephone calls to argue a case. 'Why have you rejected my application for funding the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples? You say you support human rights and yet you practise discrimination....' With a heavy heart, you explain that your budget is limited, you have to make choices, and you try to suggest alternative sources.

## Learning to listen

The issues the funder faces are all difficult. Your aim is to strengthen the commitment to a society all of whose members enjoy equal access to justice and can expect the protection of a wide range of human rights. If, as does the Ford Foundation, you believe that 'the best way to meet this challenge is to encourage initiatives by those living and working closest to where problems are located', you must learn to listen and to respond to the human rights community, and your grantees will almost all be Russian organisations.

Any grant-maker should bear in mind that it is unpleasant to have to ask for money, and it is unpleasant to have to refuse. But in the field of human rights it is harder than that. You must balance the demands of short-term, often desperate needs with support for measures that will encourage long-term generational change. Blatant abuses require immediate action, and your decisions affect lives. You are a charitable organisation, but your focus is organisations that will prevent the abuses, not on humanitarian aid. When the despairing leader of a refugee organisation says: 'If we wanted to hold yet another training seminar, I could get the money tomorrow from western funders, but the Chechen refugees in Moscow need bread to feed their children', how do you respond?

## Avoiding duplication ...

The huge size of the country magnifies the task. The intellectual leadership of the human rights community is in Moscow but hundreds of groups have sprung up across the country: mostly very small and predominantly issue-oriented, they try to tackle several tasks at once. No western foundation can make good decisions on how to choose between dozens of small organisations, some five time zones away. Site visits are critical

for choices and monitoring progress, but funders differ. Your task is to be aware of what others are doing (not always easy) and to try to ensure you work together.

## ... and dependency

The Ford Foundation aims to support organisations not projects, and to assist them for several years, easing out once they have established a firm base for themselves. Not so simple in an environment where domestic funding is short, the tax environment for NGOs lethal, and membership dues or subscriptions non-existent. There's a thin line between providing support that allows an organisation – and its activities – to develop, and creating dependency.

Between 1996 and 2002, the grant programme was aimed at strengthening the human rights community, *as a community*, able to communicate and to cooperate and, simultaneously, focused on support for those working with particularly vulnerable communities: conscripts, prisoners, children, and victims of domestic violence. Its several strands included: support for key Moscow-based human rights organisations with local chapters (for example, the International Memorial Society) or with local partners (Committees of Soldiers' Mothers), and for regional

*continues page 13*

## MENTAL HEALTH IN RUSSIA

# Somewhere there's a Kalashnikov

by Donald Ridley

**T**he mistake people make when they talk about human rights is to discuss it from a moral perspective. Discussing human rights in moral terms leads to an endemic group psychopathology – Dialogues of Alternating Reciprocal Culpability (DARC!). How many times do we have to see opposing parties abuse the rights of one another using history and morals as a justification for their behaviour? To move things forward we need to think about human rights in a different way. What does this have to do with Russia? Quite a lot: Russia has many examples of how we might usefully take an organisational or systemic view of human rights rather than a moral view.



Photo: courtesy Donald Ridley

Social innovation in action at a social care facility in Tomsk

### Mental health and human rights

Mental health in Russia is a case in point. Despite visible assurances of patients' human rights on the walls of psychiatric clinics, despite visits from well-meaning western mental health professionals and technical assistance projects, the facts remain depressing. Treatment and diagnosis are almost always focused on the medical, instead of being oriented towards the community. In one typical Russian city with a population of 180,000 there are just under 200 psychiatric beds in the hospital system. Of 10,000 out-patient consultations per year, 4,000 consist of those taking six monthly repeats of tranquilliser and anti-depressants. There is no community health system to deal with the two endemic mental health problems, namely depression and alcoholism. The population of 180,000 has, at the very least, about 25,000 people with some form of mental health problem. At most, 6,000 of them are accessing mental health services,

70% of whom will probably not recover, but will attain some form of chronic stasis, possibly maintained by medication. Nearly 20,000 people are suffering from untreated mental health problems. Of these some will make a spontaneous self-led recovery, but the majority will 'maladapt' in silence. Are their human rights and those of their families being abused? Of course they are.

### The heart of the matter

The difficulty is presented as one of capacity and money, but this is a misperception. The problem is one of attitude and organisation, not of resource. The organisational infrastructure will not change because it is in nobody's organisational interest to do so. The failure is not one of political leadership. The issue is not one of moral deficit. The problem lies in the failure to set up organisational structures that include all stakeholders.

**MENTAL HEALTH IN RUSSIA**


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One typical Russian city with a population of 180,000 has, at the very least, about 25,000 people with some form of mental health problem. At most, 6,000 of them are accessing mental health services.

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**Calling home-grown innovators**

There is little need for questionable western training programmes. What is needed is Russian-led innovation in raising community awareness and support for mental health. It is time for the fabled Russian ingenuity to turn its attention to finding robust, reliable and effective solutions to social problems. Russia is both rich and poor, compassionate and insensitive but most of all it is innovative. Where are the designers of humane social systems for Russia? They are in Russia. Their time has come. Now is the time for social innovation. Somewhere there are the social equivalents of the Kalashnikovs, Ilyushins and Tupolevs. The innovators. These people exist in every sector of the Russian community. They have the answers already. Someone should take the trouble to ask them the questions, genuinely include all the stakeholders (in this case people with mental

health problems, their families and all types of mental health workers and volunteers) and take on board their knowledge and understanding. Only then can the tide of endemic human rights abuse, caused by subtle self interests and bland indifference be reversed. The first step is asking the question. It's the hardest step, but it's the key to organisational change. Be humble enough to know that you might be wrong and brave enough to ask for help. Oddly enough, this is the key to improving human rights.

In my experience in this field, human rights are abused because people don't want to change the small things. It is not a conscious decision to abuse people. People just go home early or lock the office door. Just like us in the West when we buy goods made under work conditions we would never tolerate. We are all blemished. It's the same indifference.

And if the Russians manage to sort this one out, perhaps they could then share the answer with the rest of us. We are a long way up a blind alley on this one.

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**Speaking out on behalf of funders** *cont. from page 11*

human rights organisations with outreach (the Perm Human Rights Centre); support for new information networks that serve the whole community (Human Rights Online) or for travelling exhibitions; enabling Russian organisations, with the imagination and capacity, to run their own small grants programmes country-wide (the Fulcrum Foundation, Penal

Reform International); support for the training of young lawyers, specialising in soldiers', refugees' or prisoners' rights, thus addressing both immediate needs and creating a future generation of human rights lawyers.

The present domestic climate is not auspicious, and western governments have proved unreliable allies. The Russian human rights community is

taking stock of itself and the new situation, as indeed is Borislav Petranov, a human rights lawyer and the Ford Foundation's new Program Officer.

**- CONTACT -**

For more information visit the Ford Foundation website:  
[www.fordfound.org](http://www.fordfound.org)

# Making a case for justice

*by Professor Bill Bowring*

Bill Bowring, Professor of Human Rights and International Law at London Metropolitan University, looks at the process and problems of establishing a large scale project with a Russian NGO partner.

The European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC) is a three year project based at London Metropolitan University. It started in January 2003, with a grant of 1m Euro from the European Commission (European Human Rights and Democracy Initiative). Its purpose is to strengthen the capacity of Russian women and men to bring cases to the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg. Just over a year into the project period, it has some 50 cases against the Russia Federation, of which six, arising from the conflict in Chechnya, were declared admissible in December 2002. Other cases concern discrimination against Meskhetian Turks, and the effects of environmental pollution.

## Project beginnings

The project was conceived in early 2000, at the start of the Second Chechen War. Between October 1999 and January 2000 there were a number of shocking allegations of gross violations of European Convention rights: the bombing of the refugee column leaving Grozny on 29 October; a massacre in Grozny in January; and the bombing of the village of Katyr-Yurt on 4 February.

These cases were originally documented by Human Rights

Watch (HRW) and the 'Memorial' society. 'Memorial', which started as the chronicler of Soviet repression, now has a Human Rights Centre, and representatives in Chechnya. At that time HRW had no capacity to bring cases to Strasbourg (subsequently the Chechen Justice Initiative was established with HRW, and EHRAC works closely with it). There was just one young volunteer working on preparing the applications. In January 2001, with Diederik Lohman of HRW, I assisted with drafting replies to the Russian Government's observations. It was clear that a much greater resource was required.

I therefore decided to make an application to the EC's programme. This seemed the only realistic possibility for large scale funding. I knew that DFID would not fund such a project - I was at that time DFID's Human Rights Adviser in Russia.

The inspiration for the model proposed to the EC was the Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP), with its highly successful case-work strategy. In many respects EHRAC is different. For the EC application, it was decided to create a partnership with 'Memorial' in Russia, and with the Human Rights Committee of the Bar of England and Wales

(BHRC). BHRC is able to provide a pool of experienced barristers eager to work on cases pro bono. It also made sense to base this project in a large academic institution.

## Structuring EHRAC

The project is managed from LondonMet, where I am Academic Coordinator, and Phil Leach (formerly Legal Director of KHRP, who became a Senior Lecturer at the University in September 2002) is Project Director. The Manager is Tina Devadasan, also formerly KHRP, supported by Yelena Volkova, and a team of volunteers and interns.

EHRAC has its own central Moscow office, with three (exceptionally gifted and dedicated) Russian lawyers supported by an office manager, and five field representatives, one in Chechnya, the others in important regions. Many donors in Russia fund week-long training sessions on the ECHR, and EHRAC also has intensive training for its lawyers and representatives. EHRAC's novel contribution is that it funds a British lawyer to live in Moscow and work with EHRAC for three months of each project year. The first was the barrister Miriam Carrion, who tirelessly put cases in order, organised databases,

**FUNDING**

and, most important, worked every day alongside the Russian lawyers, imparting legal knowledge and experience and English drafting skills.

The application was made to the EC in April 2001, and, following a second round of bidding, we were informed of our success in ... December 2002. This delay is not unusual for the EC. It was a very happy coincidence that at the same moment that we had admissibility on the first six cases, Phil had joined the university, and 'Memorial' were still on board.

The project was launched on 13 May 2003, with a splendidly forceful lecture by Lord Frank Judd, recently resigned (in disgust at the Chechen constitutional 'referendum') from his position as Council of Europe Rapporteur. The event was co-sponsored by Amnesty International, with which EHRAC has the closest working relations.

The best news is that the project is acquiring a real reputation for competence, and applicants are being referred to

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the Moscow office by international organisations. We are now eagerly awaiting the final decisions on the first six cases.

**FUNDING CLOSING DATES****Department for International Development (DFID): Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)**

The aim of the CSCF is to support initiatives which strengthen the capacity of poor people to understand and demand their rights – civil, political, economic and social – and to improve their economic and social well-being. Further information on the kinds of activity supported and the nature of partnership arrangements are set out on their website:

[www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk) under 'Funding Schemes and Scholarships'.

100% funding is available up to £500,000 for a maximum of five years. Deadline for full proposals is 31 July 2004 for funding beginning 1 April 2005.

For more information, contact the Deputy Programme Manager, Steve Nally, on +44 (0) 1355 84 3199

Details about all DFID schemes are available from DFID's Public Enquiry Point:

email: [enquiry@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk); tel: 0845 300 4100.

From outside the UK: +44 1355 84 3132

**THE COMMUNITY FUND, INTERNATIONAL GRANTS PROGRAMME**

The International Grants Programme is for UK-based organisations working with partners abroad. This programme is continuous, so there are no closing dates for applications. Electronic application forms (EAF) can be downloaded from their website:

[www.community-fund.org.uk](http://www.community-fund.org.uk), or by calling 0845 791 9191. CD-ROMs are also available. International enquiry line: 020 7747 5294.

**THE SMALL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS SCHEME (SEPS)**

Managed by the British Council on behalf of DFID, SEPS aims to improve the sustainability of Russian environmental policy and practice by strengthening the role of NGOs and local government departments. Grants are available for Russian-British partnerships addressing environmental management and planning, waste management and environmental monitoring and pollution control. For more information, visit [www.britishcouncil.ru/work/woseps.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.ru/work/woseps.htm) or contact 0161 957 7828. SEPS is part of DEFRA's Environment for Europe Fund (020 7944 6225).

**TACIS INSTITUTION BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME: SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL INITIATIVES**

This programme is a follow-up of the previous Tacis Lien and City Twinning Programmes. The IBPP Call for Proposals 2004 is now closed. Visit the EuropeAid website for more information:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm)

**WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY**

WFD funds organisations and projects that aim to build pluralist, democratic institutions abroad.

Deadlines for applications

Board meetings

4 May 2004

14 July 2004

16 August 2004

19 October 2004

Enquiries: 020 7930 0408 or visit their website:

[www.wfd.org](http://www.wfd.org)

# The BEARR Trust diary

## April 2004

Development of OZON (NGO) website commences in continuation of the HSCP project 'Developing a network of child protection in Russia'.

## May

25th: Embassy reception in Moscow for The BEARR Trust.

## June

21st: The BEARR Trust launch of Simon Sebag Montefiore's book 'Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar' in paperback, and lecture chaired by Professor Robert Service of St Antony's College, Oxford. To be held at King's College, London SE1.

Pervouralsk seminar 'Emotional Burn Out at Work: how to prevent it; how to deal with it'. First in a series of themed seminars to be held at the Uspekhn Centre, Pervouralsk.

Development of training materials for deaf children, their parents and teachers as part of HSCP project RUS082 'Opening School Doors to Deaf Children in Nizhny Novgorod'.

## forthcoming

### July

Pervouralsk: Civil Society Master Class 'How to Raise the Profile of Local Problems and Present Solutions' at the Uspekhn Centre in association with the Union of Entrepreneurs.

### September

Second themed seminar 'Emotional Burn Out at Work: how to prevent it; how to deal with it' to be held at the Uspekhn Centre, Pervouralsk.



The BEARR Trust is very grateful to Amnesty International UK for supporting this special human rights edition of the BEARR Newsletter.

Training seminars in Nizhny Novgorod for teachers of mainstream schools, followed by a round table for local authority representatives to discuss the integration of deaf children into mainstream education.

### October

15th: Konevets Quartet perform in aid of BEARR at Pembroke College, Oxford.

### November

19th: BEARR Annual Conference.

## About The BEARR Trust

**Patrons:** The Duchess of Abercorn, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Elena Bashkirova Barenboim, Lady Fall, Myra Green OBE, Professor Geoffrey Hosking, Lady Hurd, HE Sir Roderick Lyne KBE CMG, Dr Jonathan Miller CBE, Anthony Oppenheimer, Rair Simonyan, Sir Andrew Wood GCMG, Sir Norman Wooding CBE

The BEARR Trust is a British registered charity. It was formed in 1991 to act as a bridge between the welfare and health sectors of Britain and the former Soviet Union (FSU). It has four main aims:

- to collaborate with British organisations working with the voluntary, social welfare and health sectors in the FSU, particularly in order to provide information and advice;
- to be a clearing house for information about British activities in the FSU and, where appropriate, to make this information public;
- to bring British and FSU organisations together for the transfer of information, skills and material aid;
- to initiate projects that will strengthen the FSU's voluntary, social welfare and health sectors.

**Trustees:** Michael McCulloch (Chairman), John Church, Professor Michael Holman, Marcia Levy, Ann Lewis CMG, Nicola Ramsden

**Staff:** Director: Daryl Hardman; Information and Projects Officer: Rachel Watson; Finance Officer: John Kidd

**Volunteers:** Neville Collins, David Gower, Galina Keene, Tamar Lordkipanidze, Natalya Miroevskaya, Sara Pfaffenhoefer, Stephanie Reardon, Alena Ryzhikova, Natasha Sturgeon, Anna von Bennigsen, Imogen Wade, Vaughan Webber, Tim Woodhead

**Editorial Board:** Leila Carlyle, Michael Holman, Rachel Watson

Registered charity no: 1011086

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Become a Friend of BEARR and receive the Newsletter as well as details of our events throughout the year.

- I wish to become a Friend of The BEARR Trust. Minimum gift £30 per year.
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- I wish to make a donation and enclose a cheque for £.....(pay to The BEARR Trust).
- I wish to make a regular donation by banker's order.

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Contact details may be made available to other voluntary organisations working in or with the former Soviet Union, unless you tick this box to indicate that this information is confidential.

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