



**FOUNDATIONS  
FOR FREEDOM**

## Newsletter

Number 14 - APRIL 1997

*As we're waiting for a new roller,  
we apologize for the quality  
of photos.*

*Dear friends,*

*Believe it or not time is flying so fast that spring and Easter have come. It is one of the most beautiful seasons of the year, for everything is waking up and blossoming. We wish you a peaceful and blessed time. Hope you'll enjoy this Newsletter as well as spring.*

*Yours, Jarmila and Gabra*

# What is Foundations for Freedom?

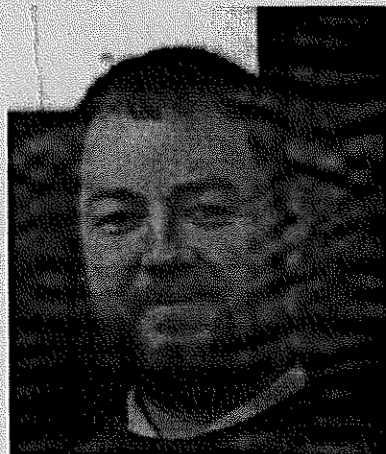
*At the reception in Tirley Garth for the ten Ukrainian MPs who recently visited Britain (report overleaf) Mike Lowe gave a summary of the ideas behind FFF.*

**F**oundations for Freedom is an initiative of Moral Re-Armament, which has a long history of making the links between the values and choices of individuals and the way society works. This link can be well illustrated by a discussion that came up earlier in the week about freedom in the press. In Britain we have a free press, and some of our Ukrainian guests were surprised that in Britain we have no laws specifically governing the press. In this country the argument goes that so long as the press can govern themselves responsibly we have no need of such laws. If the press cannot behave responsibly then we may have to introduce some laws to govern them.

The same arguments can apply to individuals. If individuals can govern themselves responsibly then there is no need for strong external authority in the form of laws. Thus morality, which is largely about how we relate to each other responsibly, is central to the idea of a free society.

How is it that this basic truth has been largely forgotten? The answer is rather complicated, but in simple terms, religion came to be associated with oppressive political regimes. Thus, after the Bolshevik revolution in the East and the Enlightenment in the West, new traditions grew which saw religion as the enemy of freedom. It

is said that there is a simple process where morality follows religion. One generation believes but, for whatever reason, stops going to church. The next generation stops believing, but still lives by the moral values of their parents. By the time you get to the third gen-



eration they neither believe nor accept the morality of their parents.

Thus, little by little, we in the West have lost the morality, the skills which are necessary to living in a free society. As people cease being honest, trust suffers and the basic cohesion of society begins to disintegrate. We risk a new situation like the dark ages, when our ancestors stood among the ruins of Rome and wondered at what manner of men had created such things.

How can these basic skills, this basic morality be rebuilt? Above all we must rediscover faith in God. Not the authoritarian God who is so often portrayed but God the intimate lover who rejects nothing he has made. God who, in the words of the psalmist, knows the words that are on our lips before they are even spoken, who wills us,

encourages us and loves us towards full freedom as His sons and daughters. God who is the guarantor of hope, the enemy of destructive cynicism.

This God is best discovered through silence and through obeying the little that we already know of Him. It has been wisely said that obedience is the eye of the spirit - that in the realm of the spirit, understanding grows through obedience, not through knowledge. Thus we must also rediscover the eternal moral values which lie beneath the shifting tides of fashion and culture; values which are not external to us, but burned into our deepest soul. There is a Christian tradition, particularly in the Eastern churches, that one shouldn't speak too precisely about such things, that words can never convey the full depth and mystery of God. It is therefore in this spirit that we use the words absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. These words can speak directly to the heart, cutting through the confusion of culture and fashion, while still retaining the power, the depth and mystery that belong to God.

This, then, is the work of Foundations for Freedom. When we look at the size of the task before us it is enormous and we are few. However, we are encouraged by the sense that we are following where God leads us. At the end of the day this is not our task but God's and He has a plan for the world's salvation. In the words of the famous English mystic, Mother Julian of Norwich: "In the end all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well."

**F**oundations for Freedom hosted a group of 10 young members of the Ukrainian parliament in Britain for a ten-day programme "Making Democracy Work" in late February. The cross-party group was selected with the help of some of our friends in the parliament who had taken part in a similar programme in November 1994 and who wanted to see this kind of programme repeated for other politicians.



*Volodymyr Tkachenko*

The programme focussed on the values which are needed for democracy to succeed, and particularly on the importance of dialogue and building trust. During their stay, the politicians met members of the British government, parliament, civil service and police, they visited schools, the BBC and local government in Liverpool and North Wales. Johannes Østtveit, who was a Norwegian MP for eight years and is a member of the FFF advisory board, came to help host the group and share his experience.



*Meeting Sir James Lester MP in Parliament*

At first there was some mistrust and suspicion. The Ukrainians thought that we must be arranging this programme because there was some advantage to us, and they couldn't understand what we were getting out of it. But on our second evening in Tirley Garth, the MRA conference centre in northern England, we had a deep and honest conversation about the basis of the programme. The discovery that Foundations for Freedom is run on a largely voluntary basis by peo-



*MPs visiting Liverpool*

help each other."

From then there was much greater openness and we started to become real friends. In this we were helped a lot by our young Ukrainian interpreters, Svetlana Bednash, an MRA co-worker this year, and Oleg Savchine, who took part in the FFF International Course in 1994.

Speaking at the final reception, several MPs spoke of what they had learned during the programme. One said "Many people think that politics and morality belong to different worlds, but we have seen the importance of morality and must work to raise Ukraine and Britain to a higher level." Another spoke of his vision that in our common search for the values which make freedom possible, Ukraine may become a source of such thinking for the whole world.

*A fuller report is available on request.*

## Ukrainian Politicians in Britain

*written by Mike Lowe, one of the FFF co-ordinators*



*Yuriy Sherenin*

ple genuinely motivated by ideals made a strong impression on the group, as did the discovery that we had no sense of Western superiority. One question asked was: "Do you see yourselves as doctors treating a sick patient?", to which our reply was: "We see ourselves and Ukraine as two sick patients who may become friends and



*Andriy Mostysky*

# Fledglings Fly by Erik Andren

Crimea hangs like a pendant from the south of Ukraine, into the Black Sea. Historically it has been a jewel fought over for its land and location. We were invited to bring the 12th Visiting Course here in early March 1997 by Rev. Georges Carillet, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Crimean American College (CAC).

This long-standing invitation had been prompted by Sergei Golovin who had invited VC5 to Crimea in 1995. The team, consisting of Zuzanna Parczewska, a student from Krakow, Jarmila Vrbenská, co-worker from Prague, Nick Foster, PhD student from Egham, Surrey, and Erik Andren, travelled to Odessa, then by overnight train to Simferopol. Australian Peter Thwaites joined us by the same route several days later when the Ukrainian Politicians seminar had ended.

When we arrived, the sun was shining, the sky clear and it was pleasantly warm, but our venue, set quite high in a bowl of mountains, was like an ice box! Nothing had been heated for sev-

eral months and the building was dank and freezing despite the feeble efforts of the radiators.

The participants were from CAC, which is a Christian college, where Bible studies are also available, so we had a group of participants for whom religious thought and spiritual discussion was not unaccustomed.



One evening we were visited by Dr. Emily Tymchenko, Director of CAC. She saw the performance of three sketches that participants had written as an exercise to revise and express understanding of earlier work. Dr. Tymchenko stayed the night and joined in the whole morning session on absolute standards.

At the end, the four long Quiet Times in two small groups

went very deep for many. Tears flowed freely as people got deep enough to start sorting out their lives. "I could not see myself for 19 years but did so here in 40 minutes!" "It is right to think about motives and to understand oneself. Now I know how to begin to change." "I decided never to go back to the old life of lies." "I have got many right answers as a result of VC. I realised I have a big mess waiting to clear up at home." "I have had many tears, but so much happens in these tears!" Changes in lifestyles and attitudes are likely. As usual the paradox of joy was seen after these times of deep but developmental pain.

This course was fully funded by the British 'Know How Fund' on the recommendation of HM Ambassador in Kiev, the third VC to be so funded.

Overall the course was very successful, without a discordant note throughout the days. Instead we saw the green tops of new growth in quite a few as new roots go down. We are confident that this group will be carefully nurtured by those in whose care they study. About half are keen to attend further FFF events.

## Apaches in Crimea

Having heard so much about VCs I set off for the twelfth one as a member of the faculty team. Our first attempt to leave the airport failed because our flight was cancelled so, unwillingly, we had to travel two days later heading for Odessa where we changed for the night train to Crimea.

We arrived at the Crimean mountains near the Black Sea the next day to find Eagle's Perch - the tourist centre that became our home for the next 10 days. It looked very cosy from outside but unfortunately it was very, very cold inside. It made us sit at sessions dressed up and wrapped up in blankets. To an uninitiated newcomer we must have seemed like an Apache tribe sitting in a circle talking about the Great Spirit. In fact we talked about Man, Morality, Belief and Freedom. All participants were students of the Crimean-American College aiming to be interpreters in English and German. Thanks to the high level of English comprehension their interest and un-

derstanding was caught from the very beginning. There were only ten of them plus their two teachers but the atmosphere of friendship, support and sharing was vivid. We made good friends with all of them in quite a short time. Being mainly a girls group we happily celebrated Women's Day - still one of the most important days in the Ukrainian calendar.

The course made us all think about ourselves and our place in this world, compare our hopes and fears to find out that we have got the same problems that need to be dealt with, that we are not left alone in our troubles but that we need to be open and honest with others but first of all with ourselves, to come out from this vicious circle.

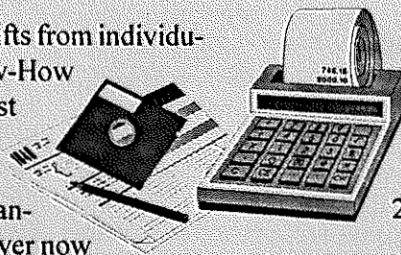
Coming to the end of the course the open sharing became very precious. Through the floods of tears we washed our souls and in mutual support we found the enjoyment and happiness from giving but also getting the greatest proof of friendship - LOVE.

Jarmila Vrbenská

# From the treasurer

Thanks partly to some wonderful gifts from individuals, and partly to the British Know-How Fund financing the cost of the latest Visiting Course in Crimea, we have reached the financial target for the end of March which we announced in the last newsletter. Prayer now focuses on the needs for the next FFF programmes. The seminar in Moldova at the end of May will require approximately £2,000. The Visiting Course in West Ukraine, and the International Seminar (probably) in Lithuania, both in August, will each need at least a similar sum. September's International Course will cost in the region of £10,000, though some contributions can be expected from participants. We are hoping that the Visiting Course in Novosibirsk in June will be funded from official sources.

Together with general overheads, but taking into account funds in hand or promised, we will need approximately £12,500 by the end of September. Would anyone like to sponsor a student on the International Course (£400)?



# Diary

## April 14-18

\**European Students Initiative* course at Tirley Garth (applications to Keith Wells, 26 Bents Green Ave, Sheffield, S11 7RB, tel. 0114-320 2255)

## May 23-25

\*Seminar in Moldova, 'The Search For Freedom'

## June

\**European Students Initiative* in Sheffield

\*Visiting Course in Novosibirsk

## August

\*Visiting Course in Western Ukraine

\*International seminar in Lithuania (more details available from John and Diana Bennett at 3 Strutt Close, Birmingham B15 3PW)

## September 4-23

\*International Course at Tirley Garth (invitations available)



## *European Students Initiative*

### *Liz Carlisle reports from the first residential course*

ESI began for me a little dishearteningly because of the lack of new people and the small number. Despite my apprehension by the afternoon of the first day I already began to sense a feeling of community, self-discovery and skills which could be useful in life.

David and Judith Curtis started with looking at our temperaments. I was quite shocked to find that how others found me was not how I perceived myself. This understanding of temperaments led on to how we deal with others at work, how to get the best out of our work matter by building on the qualities people have within their temperaments.

There was an interesting mix of enjoyable games which were used to show how you work in negotiations. The behavioural analysis of how we played the boat game helped us to see the different ways we discuss and make decisions. This was not

approached in a matter of right or wrong but just to make us aware of whether we talk too much, shut others out, bring people in, etc.

The highlight for me was the third day, which drew all this informa-

tion together. We looked at ourselves as a whole - thinking, feeling and willing, and at how we naturally are analytical thinkers and tend to presuppose that our ancestors were the same - which undermines how the first human tribes understood and viewed the world.

A valuable experience was listening at our three different levels, thinking, feeling and willing. We saw the inadequacy of words to describe feelings which are just as important as thinking. From there we looked at the relationship of science and technology.

Apart from looking within and exploring the different levels of man, one of the major qualities of the course was the friendship and openness that was built. This included relationships with faculty as well because one could talk freely and openly about many difficulties. The participants were given a freedom and trust that is not often felt within MRA. I felt I did not have to hide parts of my personality to be accepted and liked. From the course we were able to talk about difficulties in MRA. Religion was not a forced issue but came up naturally and was therefore discussed with more sincerity.

The course has helped me to view things differently and not discount my feelings or discuss negativity but to use all in a sensitive way. I just hope more people will have the opportunity to experience what I have and remember words cannot give justice to feelings. So thanks.

