



Andrei Sakharov  
Research Center  
Vytautas Magnus  
University

# Building Bridges

Thoughts about the other Russia

Second Leonidas Donskis Memorial Conference

— With Vyacheslav Bakhmin, Yevgeni Gindilis, Mikhail Shishkin and Andrew Wood —

Conference report

## Organizers



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS  
UŽSIENIO REIKALŲ MINISTERIJA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA



VYTAUTO  
DIDŽIOJO  
UNIVERSITETAS  
MCMXXII

# Introduction

Robert van Voren

---



For more than forty years I have been involved in Soviet – and Russian – affairs and gradually I started to understand the subject of my interest a bit more. But part of that is that I understand there is no way you can understand Russia. You need to stop thinking logically because there is no logic. You need to learn to feel it, you love it and you hate it, and that combination is shared by many if not most Russians themselves. The difference however is that, for a Russian, it is acceptable to make fun of his country, to an extent that many other nationals would not about their homeland. Self-mockery is exceptionally well developed in Russia. But as a foreigner you are always an outsider, and you have to watch your tongue because any critical remark can have a serious backlash. Best is to laugh along when Russians make fun of themselves.

So gradually, when I was hiring staff for my foundation, I would carefully listen to their views. If they would start telling me extensively how much they loved Russia, its culture, its people, the hospitality, without anything else, they would not be hired. The moment they would start telling me that they had this morbid conflicting feeling inside of loving and hating the country, a combination of two extremes, I knew I had a good candidate in front of me.

When I was still a young human rights activist, at the beginning of what you could call my career, I met one of the Soviet dissidents who had demonstrated on Red Square against the invasion in Czechoslovakia on August 25, 1968, and who had been incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital for that reason. The man, Viktor Fainberg, had been in the car with the famous historian **Andrei Amalrik** and two others – including Andrei’s wife Gyuzel – who in 1980 tried to get to Madrid to demonstrate at the conference on the Helsinki Accords that was being held there. Being stateless citizens they had to get into the country illegally, and so they tried to enter Spain via Andorra. They got lost, of course, and only after 24 hours managed to get onto the road to Madrid. There the car crashed, and Amalrik was killed.

Fainberg was sitting in my hotel room, smoking his special type of cigarette. As a former political prisoner he was used to smoking “makhorka”, a horrible type of tobacco stronger than cigarettes like Gauloises or Belomorkanal. He would roll pipe tobacco in a piece of paper from the newspaper Pravda, and a toxic blue fume would envelop his face. “So how did it happen you had this accident, Vitya?” I asked. “Oh well,” he said, pulling again on his cigarette. “Put four Russians in a car and you have five opinions.”

This is of course a tragicomic story, but along the way I got to know how much Vitya Fainberg was right and for many years I was caught up in the fight among different dissident factions in the West that were waging a struggle for émigré leadership of the dissident movement while their colleague dissidents were being rounded up in the Soviet Union and really didn’t care a bit whether one or the other was the real “leader” representing them in the West. Anyway, the real “leader”, if there ever was anything like that, was Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov who stayed far away and above this infighting.

So my life with Russia started actually with the “other Russia”, the human rights movement, an amazing collective of mostly very special people who opened their doors to me without even knowing who I was, who shared their stories, happiness and sorrow with me as if I was one of their own, and whose humor, melancholy, wisdom and perseverance changed my life fundamentally. That is the Russia that I fell in love with, and the Russia I know that is there, with an amazing hospitality and willingness to share. And at the same time I encountered the harsh Russia, the state, the ruthless and vindictive apparatus that mauls its citizens when they dare to go against the grain and that is historically built upon fear and since Soviet times on outright terror. As one of the long-standing Memorial activists Irina Flige recently put it, “in Russia there is an unquestioned, ancient and fundamental presumption that the state has the prerogative to kill its citizens and all ‘human rights’ considerations are subordinate to this.”

Of course, there is now also another dimension to this Russia, which is the almost perfect symbiosis or merger of criminality and power, which makes Russia such a dangerous place. In my view in a way it is now more dangerous than in Soviet times when strangely

enough a certain legality existed, where killing of opponents was not a frequent occasion and deaths like that of **Yuri Galanskov, Vasyl Stus and Valery Marchenko** were rather uncommon. Sometimes – such as in the case of Anatoly Marchenko – they were also the result of inertia and a slowly reacting bureaucratic system. Now nobody is safe, both within the country and abroad. It is as if the time of the Special Operations Department of the NKVD is back, when opponents to the regime were murdered or blown to pieces like Yevhen Konovalts on the Coolsingel Boulevard in Rotterdam. In particular over the past two decades assassinations have become a regular feature of the Putin regime, and outrage is met by a totally cynical indifference on the part of the Russian government.

At the same time, we wonder if there will be ever a moment when the Russian population will finally awake from this nightmare and realize that the current regime is not interested in the well-being of the nation, but only in their own personal wellbeing, and is gradually leading the country to the abyss. One of my friends recently wrote: “Without any genuine politicians, how can there be real politics? You can’t escape from a submarine. All society is suffering deep depression from an inability to plan, from the awareness of its instability...”

Over the past two decades the country has re-Sovietized at a high speed, and all the efforts in developing a civil society and establishing a rule of law seem to have been in vain. Even though his popularity is decreasing, Putin still looks firmly in control, although it is becoming more and more evident that society is moving and might reach a boiling point in the coming year or two, resulting in bloody clashes or even a civil war. But then if there would be a regime change, his successor might turn out to be an even more odious character. The neighboring countries, such as Georgia and Ukraine, are feeling the direct effects of the psychopathology of the regime that managed to concoct a weird mix of Sovietism, Stalinism and imperial Russia, but also the Russian population is victim and in a sort of eternal state of Stockholm syndrome.

Yet we also know there is another Russia. We don’t see much of it, but we know it is there, just like it was there in Soviet times. Now, thirty or forty years later, we know that there were many more “agents of change” within the Soviet system than we thought of. Civil servants or diplomats who, while risking their positions and maybe even their careers or lives, tried to change the system from within, such as Anatoly Kovalev, one of the chief Soviet diplomats negotiating the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The picture was far from the monolithic one we in the West believed in, but at that time it all seemed black and white, good or bad.

Now it is undoubtedly not different.

So one of the reasons for organizing this conference is that we should counter thinking in black and white stereotypes, and never forget there is still “another Russia” that is not Putinist, does not think the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a great diplomatic success and

that all Ukrainians are “Judeobanderovyte fascists”. We know there is a Russian opposition, and particularly an increasingly **vocal younger generation**, whose hopes and dreams are no other than those of young people in other parts of Europe. And we also know there are sizeable groups of Russians who do not belong to or believe in this opposition, yet at the same time do not want to have anything to do with the current regime and just want to live normal decent lives without the fake grandeur of belonging to a Potemkin imperium where small group of extremely rich people rob the country of everything valuable without even recognizing and understanding the value itself.

Just like the Helsinki Accords in 1975 and the following process greatly strengthened the human rights movement in the Eastern Bloc and, in spite of increasing repression, eroded the Soviet regime and led to the disintegration of the Soviet empire, we need to find ways to reach out to the other Russia, both visible and invisible, and find ways to build bridges for the future. Because there will be a time when that other Russia becomes more dominant and when the current regime is replaced by one that is built on a true understanding of reality and not a fake patriotism, one that understands that good neighborly relations are more beneficial than trying to bully your neighbors into submission.

There will be that moment, I am sure, it is historically inevitable, and we can bring it closer or sooner by reaching out to that “other Russia” that we will discuss today.

So today we have a unique panel touching upon these issues. Among them is a former political prisoner of the Soviet regime, who was a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group; a well-known film Russian director, whose film we saw this morning; a Russian journalist of the Economist, who recently published a magnificent book “The Invention of Russia”; one of the most prominent Russian writers, Mikhail Shishkin; and the former British Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Andrew Wood.

The only person missing here is **Leonidas Donskis**, who we remember today and who passed away three years ago, coincidentally when he was on his way to his beloved St. Petersburg. He too had this duality towards Russia, being a Russophobe and a Russophile at the same time. He would have greatly enjoyed being here and participate in the discussions, but in a way he is with us today – maybe not in body but certainly in spirit.

**Robert van Voren is Executive Director of the Andrei Sakharov Research Center for Democratic Development at Vytautas Magnus University**



I understand my task in my short speech is nevertheless to talk about what I know most and best of all. And what I know best is what is happening with civil society in my country, since I myself consider that I have been involved with this now for more than 50 years – the development of civil society in the Soviet Union, and then in the Russian Federation. Of course, my perspective will be the viewpoint from there, from inside civil society. And this viewpoint will likely show you what Robert was speaking about, that in Russia, the situation is not black and white; it is a very complex, complicated and colorful situation in which there is a place for everything: there is a place for the terrible and the wonderful; there is a place for the beautiful and the ugly, just like it is in general everywhere in life. And that has to be kept in mind.

I forgot to thank you for inviting me here. I am very glad to speak to this audience. This is not my first time in Lithuania; I was here in the Soviet era as well, and now I'm here in independent Lithuania. We all love the Baltic states very much and Lithuania in particular. So I confess to this love. It was nice as well to see Vilnius and Kaunas, and to recall Čiurlionis, whom we all adored back in the day<sup>1</sup>. It seems apropos to mention this.

So, I would simply like to talk about the trends that exist now in Russia from the perspective of the development of civil society. First, it's not clear what civil society is itself, because it can be defined in different ways. It can be defined, as I usually say, as a society of citizens.

<sup>1</sup> Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Lithuanian painter, composer and writer (1875-1911).

That is, in every society, there are people whom we call “ordinary people” – that is, those who simply live their lives, who have some sort of interests of their own, and who on the whole do not think very much about what is going on around them. There are people whom we call “subjects” – that is, people who do think, but think about how best to fit in under this government, how to serve this government (there are such people in any state), for whom the state is more important than the person, and for whom it is important that the state be strong. Then there are people who are “citizens”. And here, in my view, is civil society – a society of citizens. A citizen not according to their passport, but a citizen with regard to his country, to what is going on in it. These people must be conscious, responsible; they must understand what is going on, and try to make the country different, better – as they understand it.

If we are talking about such a civil society, then it consists of a structural element (the so-called non-profit organizations) and just various movements of active citizens which temporarily come together, and then disperse and solve their own problems. If we speak even of the structured part, we see that that this is the very civil society which I have been talking about, but there are also people who get together in some kind of groups, but they support the government; that is, they are loyal to the government, they try to work for the government and oppose another part of civil society which understands that what is happening in the country needs changes – that is, the disloyal part. And there is also the so-called dark civil society. These are all kinds of Russian Orthodox and patriotic activists who often fight with the real civil society, and display their initiative. They are on the side of the government, but sometimes even criticize the government for not fighting its own enemies very radically. So the very picture of civil society is quite diverse.

And now a few words about trends. If in the 1990s and the early 2000s, the government didn't pay attention to civic organizations at all, figuring that these were some sort of sewing circles which are doing something and this is entirely unimportant to us, lately the government has realized, especially after the so-called “color revolutions,” that civil society can be a force. And they gradually began not only to pay attention, but to work with civil society, passing laws restricting the freedom of civic organizations. On the other hand, they began cultivating those who were loyal to them and opposing those who were not very loyal.

After the passage of the so-called “laws on undesirable organizations,” which restricted support of the non-profit sector and were mainly directed at donor organizations that supported non-profit organizations from abroad, foreign funding was nearly ended in the country or reduced to a very small amount. If before, non-profit organizations were supported mainly from abroad, now it was the reverse tendency and the government began to support non-profit organizations. This has been going on for the last 10 years, but only for the last three years, from 2017-2019, has this been done by a new organizations which is called the Fund for Presidential Grants and which tries to restore the reputation of such

support. Because before the creation of the Fund, support from the authorities was always very non-transparent; it was aimed only at loyal organizations, at the capitals, Moscow and St. Petersburg, and money rarely reached the provinces. Now, the distribution of funds is much more transparent and very large funds, by comparison with some other sources, are going to the civic sector for support of various types of social projects. And this has made the civic part of the population more active.

Furthermore, the sector is becoming more professionalized. Again, in recent years, a fair number of professional associations have appeared in the non-profit sector, starting with lawyers for civil society and ending with an association of fund-raisers. There are a lot of such associations, and a lot of training is accessible for non-commercial organizations. Philanthropy is growing stronger, that is, the part of civil society which does charity and aid to poor people. Numerous private funds have appeared. Private donations have begun to grow very actively. And crowd-funding. That is, all of this appeared in the last 5-10 years and is developing quite rapidly.

And of course this growth is happening thanks to the development of information technologies, in particular the Internet, about which we all know and without which life is unimaginable. The same is happening in Russia as well, because the Internet now in the country is fairly developed. More than 70% of the population has access to broadband Internet. Non-profit organizations can use this as well. Such access to new technologies, which is really revolutionary for all countries and for Russia in particular, of course has drastically changed the situation and has given much more power to ordinary people, citizens and non-profit organizations which perhaps 15 years ago was impossible.

As a result, we see (and the film is devoted to this) the growth of civic activism of various types. This movement began back in 2010-2011, and this civic activism was mainly proactive and positive. It consisted of the young generation. Some of the people of this age strove to leave the country because there were no opportunities for development, for building a career. And this more active part left. Another active part of the population did not want to leave. They had a different task: they had already seen a lot, they know foreign languages, they are fairly well off, and they want to live in their own country and make the country different.

It was then that these slogans appeared: "Other Russia," "We are the masters here, we want to make it so we live in another country". And it all began not with protests, as was shown in the film, but it began simply with these people trying to make life around them different. These were all kinds of civic activists, including street artists who changed the landscape around them; those who became involved with environmental problems and for example the protection of architectural landmarks, and so on. That is, a great many active groups appeared, and to this day they exist in practically every city. They are changing life around



them on their own and trying to make it so that life in the country is better. But very often, through such seemingly non-political activity, they directly run into the system which, if it does not hinder them, doesn't help them at all, and in some cases simply counters such activism. Because any government doesn't like unpredictable activism. It is always better if everything is understandable and expected. And as soon as activists run into such counterforces, they become politicized. This is how the politicization of the non-profit sector takes place, how the very protest movements are formed which we saw this morning in the film.

In general, the public began to get seriously frustrated with what was happening in the country. Practically any professional part of a community was very annoyed and unhappy with what was happening. If we take, for example, science, scientists were unhappy with that fact that the authorities had virtually dismantled the Academy of Sciences, confiscated all its property, and now completely different people were managing science. Moreover, science, like many other areas, was funded on the leftovers principle. The same concerned doctors, health workers and teachers. Constant problems were cropping up in business, the theater, and film as well – and so on and so forth.

That is, virtually every part of society, including civil society, civic organizations – all were suffering from the fact that they didn't know what their future would be. It was unpredictable. Because the laws were devised in such a way that essentially any person could be found guilty. It is impossible to obey all the laws in our country; they are contradictory and ambiguous. Therefore, every person was guilty, and those who needed to be were punished, very selectively. If you aren't in jail today, then it's simply because – as they used to say in the 1930s – the authorities overlooked you. If we need to, we'll find a reason to jail you. It really is like this, because while likely various forces decide whom to jail, nevertheless, every person can be punished. And our courts always pronounce a person guilty – this we know well. In Russia, only 0.01% of cases end in acquittal.

Incidentally, there are statistics indicating that 84% of business people believe that it is dangerous to run a business in Russia; more than 70% are convinced that Russian laws do not protect them from baseless criminal charges. And there are so many illustrations of this, that it simply becomes obvious. Naturally, the government does not understand how to react to the emerging trends, to the protests occurring. We have seen this concerns not only [opposition leader Alexey] Navalny. Because at one time, Navalny was one of the channels for expressing this dissatisfaction. He was virtually just the only channel, known

<sup>2</sup> The "Moscow Case" refers to 24 people arrested after protests in the summer of 2019 against the exclusion of independent candidates from the September 8 city legislature elections. They were charged with "mass rioting" or assaulting police, despite video footage showing that police broke up peaceful marches and assemblies. The defendants received sentences from 2-4 years of imprisonment. See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/10/30/moscow-case-what-you-need-know#> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019\\_Moscow\\_protests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Moscow_protests)

throughout the country. Now there are many more such channels both in the sense of political figures, young politicians who want to get involved in politics, which the “Moscow Case”<sup>2</sup> has illustrated, and civic activists noted above who later became politicians.

For example, our garbage [disposal] reform provoked an enormous amount of dissatisfaction and protests by large groups of people. And once again, it was hard for the authorities to do something about this. The only response clear and obvious to them is to pass more and more restrictive laws, to make punishments more and more harsh, to jail, fine and beat people, and so on. But there aren't enough prisons for everyone. Therefore, they have to think of what to do. And now it is one of the critical times when the government must decide which path to take, and it is not clear at all that it will be greater and greater repression, because this is a serious dead end for the country's development and for the government itself. That is, they must search for more sophisticated decisions.

So let me end with this. If there are any questions, I will answer them.

I could just add that of course recently, the great influence of the intelligence services has been obvious; it's excessive. Virtually all spheres are controlled from the Federal Security Service (FSB). And the FSB decides what to do both with the police, and the investigative committee, and all the other institutions. That is, they have quite a lot of power now, although they do fight among themselves; nevertheless, it is this unlimited power of the security services that is grounds for serious concern in the country's current development.



Truly, it has been a really wonderful and unique opportunity here both to show our film and discuss it, and to use this as a reason to really have a conversation about the fact that the situation in Russia is much more difficult than we would like. Perhaps we would like some sort of simpler solutions and answers, but there aren't any. And the work that we are trying to get done, in general is actually designed to emphasize this difficulty. Basically, until 2014, I was, to use Vyacheslav's terminology, just such a totally ordinary person, a producer of feature films and television serials which were shown on federal channels, and in my professional activity, I was practically never drawn into political processes.

Let's put it this way: I was aware of everything that was going on, but naturally this had no influence on my professional activity. But from the moment – actually, from the moment of Maidan and from the moment of the annexation of the Crimea, it became clear to me that the moment when a neutral position could be maintained had already passed, and that the situation was forcing us to take some sides. And the only opportunity I had at my disposal was the possibility of ceasing to make feature films and to beginning to make documentary films which directly addressed, and were directly connected with what was going on around us.

It so happened that first, we made a film about Boris Nemtsov, who was assassinated; actually, we even made two films about him, because it was the worst shock for all of us, this death. And these films in fact were very important, because they showed there exists in society an enormous demand for an honest and direct conversation about what was happening today. This is what is impossible to have on any television at all. The existing channels of communication are rather restricted.

In 2015-2016, the phenomenon we see today with the flourishing of YouTube didn't exist yet to the full extent. Nor the audience for TV Rain, which is the only opposition media. It seemed minimal. Therefore, the possibility of showing a film that could come out in movie

theaters, that people could go to the movie theater publicly and see a film about a murdered politician turns out to be an enormous factor in itself. I remember what a powerful, totally emotional outpouring was caused by the premiere of the film about Nemtsov in Moscow in the winter of 2016. It was at the Oktyabr movie theater, which is a central venue in Moscow with a capacity of 1,500 people. And when these 1,500 people staged a standing ovation for the slain Boris Nemtsov lasting ten minutes after the film ended – this in itself is a very substantial political demonstration.

And this is possible, and this is going on, and these films are being made. We are not the only ones doing this. In fact, basically the entire field of documentary film today is to a significant extent a center in which new ideas are formed, in which reality is studied and where a whole new generation, which grew up in the last 30 years, is striving somehow for self-realization and finding answers to the questions facing society.

Now, strictly speaking of today's events, and what happened after our film was finished – this is really a very interesting process, because I regret that we don't have the opportunity to do a sequel to this film, because really, it should be done. Because those events that we tried to cover that took place in 2017-2018 are directly connected to what is happening now. Because to a significant degree, the wave of Moscow protests that unfolded this summer are related to the fact that in 2017, there was a very important victory in Moscow, when a quite a large number of young politicians were able to be elected as municipal deputies.

More than 200 people got the opportunity to work as municipal deputies, and even though their powers were rather limited, and they could do little, nevertheless, this gave them the opportunity to obtain rather serious support at the local level. They began to enjoy authority. And what seemed impossible two years ago – collecting 5,000 signatures in order to be nominated as a deputy to the Moscow City Duma [legislature], became quite achievable as a result of that summer. This really came as a surprise as well both to them and the government. Because, let's put it this way: a barrier had been deliberately created in order to have the opportunity to filter out undesirable deputies, undesirable candidates. And in fact this support that they managed to garner did provide this initial stage of those protests that as we saw unfolded in Moscow.

Of course, it is very important to say that by comparison with 2011-2012, there those people who are now taking part in opposition actions today have a completely different profile. The percentage of youth among them is 3-4 times greater than the average number of young people in Russia's population. That is, about 30 percent of the people who participate in opposition actions are young people. For them, really, the ways the authorities are trying to scare them, trying to stop them, in fact are turning out to have no effect, because they aren't afraid of these repressions; they are prepared to be arrested for offenses with jail time. And we see how this huge wave of summer arrest, when more than 1,500 people in Moscow alone were arrested after July 27 [2019], how this provoked a reaction completely unpredicted by

the authorities, because people who were completely remote from opposition or protest activity were caught up in this wave of arrests.

Families wound up getting caught up in this, and the civic groups about which we have just heard. This provoked an enormous wave of support; essentially, the protest began to take on the nature of absolutely lawful activity, supported by a large part of society. We see from polls that today, virtually half the people in Moscow and around the country support to some degree the people who come out to the protests. And this is a very substantial change compared even to 2017 or 2018. And to a significant extent this is because the opposite and those people hoping for change are winning the media war. Because what are we in fact observing and what are we now picking up? We're picking up the fact that state television today cannot control and deliver the message the authorities need. In fact they cannot shape public opinion in the form in which they need it. Public opinion today is being formed thanks to YouTube.

On YouTube, there are several absolutely indisputable leaders of public opinion. For the second year now we note the completely amazing effect of the journalist Yuri Dud, who is extremely effective in relaying very important messages to an enormous number of people. The figures for the number of views of his latest film about Beslan are known. Literally within a few days, there were more than 10 million people who watched a three-hour, highly detailed, very difficult film about the Beslan tragedy. Sixteen million people watched Yury Dud's previous film about [the Stalin-era labor camp] Kolyma. And this is completely incomparable to the numbers today reached by state television, First Channel or Second Channel, the programs of government propagandists. And these same people, such as Yury Dud or the rapper Oxxxymiron, are calling on their audience to support the rallies for fair elections, rallies against political repression. And thanks to their support, the last authorized rally in Moscow, which was last summer, drew more than 60,000 people to Sakharov Square, which on the whole was comparable to the number of people who went out on the streets in 2011-2012.

And finally, what I would like to say is that this political element is really penetrating all parts of our life today. That is, if in 2016-2017, there was some kind of balance, and it seemed then that some sort of compromise was possible to achieve, when there was a ceasefire, a truce between the government, which was busy paving sidewalks and organizing city holidays, and creating an image of a European city, and the urban middle class, professionals, who were drawn into this activity and supported the government in this direction. Now this parity is completely destroyed today. It is gone, and the whole summer saga in fact exposed monstrous contradictions which exist even among the liberal wing of the Putin regime and the main part of the population. This peace treaty that had existed turned out to be totally destroyed.

<sup>3</sup> On September 1, 2004, the first day of school, Ingush and Chechen terrorists took more than 1,100 people hostage, including 777 children, in a school in Beslan in Northern Ossetia. On the third day of the siege, Russian security forces stormed with building with tanks and rockets. As a result, 335 people, including 186 children were killed, leading both to greater security measures and criticism of the Kremlin's handling of terrorist attacks—Trans.



In the most Russian text of Russian literature, Gogol's *Dead Souls*, Gogol compares Russia, as we know, with a flying troika which is speeding somewhere, evidently to a wonderful Russia of the future, overtaking other countries and states. How many school-children read these lines, and were filled with hope and faith that this buggy would arrive somewhere at last. Gogol didn't have the historical experience that we have. For him, Russia was racing into the future, to the bright and beautiful 20th century. Looking back from the 21st century, we realize that Russia the troika has hastened into an abyss, into a disaster the likes of which have never been seen.

Armed with the experience that our generation has now, Gogol would likely have compared Russia with a metro car which goes through a tunnel from one end to the other and back. At one end is dictatorship. In Russia, this is called "order". At the other end is democracy. We in Russia have never know what democracy is. There is the concept of "crapocracy," that is, anarchy and chaos. So this Russian train is going back and forth and cannot manage to break out of this tunnel.

Our generation was fortunate to rise on this train from the late sovok period to freedom, or to chaos, as we saw in the 1990s, and on this same train to return to a new Russian empire, a new Russian dictatorship in the 21st century. It is naive to think that some little Putinkin or Medvedkin wanted to build a dictatorship together: "Let's install a dictatorship in Russia!"

<sup>4</sup> Literally "dustpan". A derogatory Russian slang term derived from the word "Soviet" that refers to the crude Soviet past or an average person uncritical of the Soviet government.

The construction of a dictatorship is achieved by the joint efforts of the whole society. If there was no social demand for a dictatorship in the 1990s, no Putin could have established the regime in place now. It was the population's demand for order.

When Gorbachev came to power, here in the West, everyone was overjoyed because it seemed as if finally now democracy would be established there. But what did the old Western democracy do to help the young democracy to be established in Russia? They didn't do anything, because they had only to do one simple thing: they had to demonstrate what democracy was, what a state under the rule of law was, by their own example. People had never seen this in Russia and didn't know. But we have arrived now at the dictatorship of the 21st century which learned all the mistakes of the previous dictatorships. I was born in a dictatorship which required slaves; therefore there was barbed wire. The new dictatorship doesn't need slaves; it only needs extraction technology and a pipeline – and the West, where this oil and gas can be sold, and where this cash can be spent. The new dictatorship doesn't need a population at all. Therefore, those at the top said immediately: the borders are open, everyone who is unhappy, please, good riddance. Now this is a new type of dictatorship.

But most importantly, this regime could not be established and exist without the active support of Western democracies. How did the Western democracies show Russians how democracy works? They showed that everyone lives by the same unwritten law: where big money begins, a state under the rule of law ends.

For many years, I worked as a translator in Switzerland. I know perfectly well from the inside how the global money-laundering machine works. I know that for the last 30 years, people here were thrilled with the stream of big money from Russia. All this big money coming from Russia is criminal cash. Period. End of discussion. A gang has seized power which has taken a country hostage, taken a people hostage, and is taking away from this people the natural resources which belong to it and selling them in the West. So, how should a government under the rule of law behave? Criminals should go to prison. And that's it. You just have to follow your own laws; nothing more has to be done. Now that would have been real help to the young democracy in Russia. Just follow your own laws. How many criminals from Russia and their protectors in Switzerland, America, and Germany were jailed under these laws? This is the result that we have now. If Russia had dealt with real governments under the rule of law in the West, we would have a completely different country now.

Now today we watched a great film where people shouted, "Putin, get out!" Is it really so hard to understand that one and the same play has been enacted all the time, that one and the same play has been enacted for many hundreds of years, where Putin is only an actor. Now he is in the role of the Russian tsar, which we haven't seen in the last several centuries. Unquestionably, every actor brings something original of his own to the interpretation of

the role. But he can't change the role. The problem of Russia is not that Putin has to go; he will anyway, one way or another, but the problem is to change the play. Now how to change the play?

But for now, we know that the train is only going back and forth. That means, obviously, that we know what the next stations are. The process that has been underway in Russia is continuing – the semi-collapse of the empire. We saw a semi-collapse in 1917, when the Russian Empire fell for three months. We saw this semi-collapse in 1991, when the Soviet Empire fell for three days. Obviously, the biological chick is ticking; this could occur tomorrow, or perhaps in 10 years. But we will see how the post-Soviet empire will collapse for three hours. Russia is like the Soviet Union, like the late sovok, pregnant with new national states. We will see that immediately, the first to leave will be the Chechens, the North Caucasus, other national republics, Siberia, which will say, “But why should we feed Moscow? Why can't we sell our riches to the Chinese ourselves?” It's completely obvious that the federation that is now held together by the “power vertical” will collapse immediately. But whether that is good or not...It will happen. the question is: the states that emerge on the ruins of Russia, will they be democratic states?

The future is a glove, and a hand is the past. With such a past, which never knew and never saw either a state under the rule of law or democracy, why would democratic governments suddenly arise on the ruins of the Russian Federation? Obviously, there will be a brutal struggle for power; perhaps, God forbid, a bloody struggle for power. And all of this will take place in a country with rusty nuclear weapons. Naturally, the population will once again express a social demand for order. Obviously, once again to the question, “What is to be done?,” a person will be found who will say, “I know what to do. We need a strong hand”. And I am convinced that the West will again play a large role in this, because it will be far more pleasant for them if nuclear weapons in Russia were controlled by someone with a strong hand. And the West will support this dictatorship which will prevail in Russia. And so on.





So, from the very start, I think we are not meeting at a moment when everything is getting worse and worse and worse. It might seem this way. But I think actually, everything is in some ways getting better, although it is not always visible from the outside. It's a question of optics. And the question is, what is the "Other Russia". Is the "Other Russia" the 2 million people who watch Russian propaganda channels? Or is it the 10.5 million or 16 million who watch Yury Dud? I am not sure whether the "Other Russia" is the one that gets information on the Internet, that thinks police violence during the Moscow protests is excessive and unnecessary and cruel, which is about 48 – 60% – or those who mainly watch television and justify violence on the part of the state? Is the "Other" those who are 20-30 years old, who live in a city and who yearn for justice or those who cynically accept the order of things and warn, "you won't come out to the rally next time"? Who is "real" and who is "other" here?

It seems to me that we – and Russia is by no means unique in this – are seeing this everywhere – we are at the end of a very long cycle, a historical cycle, that began about 30 years when, as Francis Fukuyama said, it was "the end of history" and the communist regime collapsed. It seems to me this cycle is coming to an end all over the world – in the United States, in Great Britain, and in Europe. And in Russia it is also coming to an end. If you look at what is happening at the periphery, in Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia, with some differences, it is what in fact is happening in Russia, it is a phenomenon of the same order. We are seeing the end of political parties. We are seeing the end of the consensus, such as it was, after the Cold War. We see a generational change. And history is far from being as obvious as it seems. Above all, the title of this conference is "Building Bridges," and the idea of [Russian physicist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei] Sakharov, the idea of convergence, is more relevant than ever.

Many believe that Russia is doomed to remain an authoritarian, oil-dependent country. I'm not a historical determinist; I think there is nothing more damaging in trying to describe a process and what might come than just appealing to history. The fact that something didn't exist before doesn't mean it's not going to happen now. I mean, if that was the case, then no country would ever develop. If that was the case, not a single Western country would have moved from what the wonderful American institutional economist Douglass North defined as the limited access order, where the elites decide on the access to political and economic resources, to an open system where competition and the rule of law decide who gets access to political and economic resources.

Now on the question of Gogol's troika.. This is one of the most deep-rooted myths of Russian history – the myth of the great leap forward. The meaning of the Gogol's troika is that because of serfdom, drunkenness, dysfunction, Russia can make that great leap forward and overtake all of other countries. Russia is an incredibly idea-centric country; no wonder ideology so easily takes root here. The word means a great deal in Russia – hence such a hypertrophied role of literature. Russia is a country that needs a purpose and an idea. It's in that sense not dissimilar to America in its exceptionalism. What we've seen over the past decade is that Russia has become the beacon of conservatism, nationalism, imperial nationalism, aggression, etc. My thesis is that in the next iteration of history, there is a great likelihood that Russia – and if we look at the streets of Moscow and Russian internet space, and if we follow Russian debates, we will be convinced – there is a great likelihood that Russia actually will make that leap and Russia will become the beacon of extreme, I wouldn't call it liberalism, but certainly libertarianism and individualism.

Because when Alex de Tocqueville wrote in his book *Democracy in America* that America represents the free world and Russia is the epitome of tyranny, he was right but only up to a point, because the other side of that tyranny is actually anarchy. It is worth recalling that it was Russia that actually gave the world the idea of anarchy. That is why the state is tyrannical in trying to suppress the individualism and freedom existing in society. That is what we see on the streets of Moscow.

From Russian history we know, partly because of the weakness of institutions, that no subsequent leader, no new leader repeats the actions of his predecessor or goes in the same direction. The only way Russian leaders – tsars, general secretaries, presidents – have to assert themselves is by overturning the legacy of their predecessors. Putin is the best example of that. Putin was appointed to the post as Yeltsin's successor; he took this post actually not at the demand of the Russian people. Parenthetically, as an aside, I would argue with what Mikhail said in terms of the demand for dictatorship. Yeltsin, as all probably would agree,

<sup>5</sup> Sakharov's essay "Progress, Co-existence, and Intellectual Freedom" envisioned the eventual convergence of the Western capitalist system and the Soviet communist system. See <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfconf2009/english/node/20>.

was a very great politician, I mean, I don't know many politicians with that sort of animal instinct for power. He was no naive idealist. Boris Yeltsin seriously believed until a certain moment that the person who could take his place was Boris Nemtsov. The demand in fact was for that. Everything changed in the years 1997-1999. There were a lot of reasons for that – the war of oligarchs, of the young reformers who destroyed the government, the financial crisis of 1998, the war in the Balkans. That is not the point now. The point is that Putin was put there by the Yeltsin family, a small group of oligarchs, in order to play an assigned role. But even he, representing the interests of the oligarchs and put there for the purpose of protecting their wealth, to ensure things continue; even he, within 15 years completely overturned Yeltsin's political legacy. That is why the West must be prepared for this moment; it needs to build bridges now, to identify people with whom we must do business, and I think that this must be done in a rather short period of time.

And one of the most important things happening in Russia today – Yevgeny spoke of this – is the existence of two Russias. There is a kind of old television Russia and there is internet Russia. The way you get information undoubtedly shapes your picture of the world. We know that media and politics have completely merged and that politicians are media machines. Trump is a media machine; Alexey Navalny is a media machine. But I am interested not in what Yury Dud does or rapper Oxxxymiron does, because no matter how talented they are, I don't think that they provide moral guideposts and values. We do not live in the age of Tolstoy . We are in the age of media, internet, etc. The most interesting thing about Dud and his 16 million or 10 million views is that it's not that he tells his subscribers to come out on the street; it's the audience that tells him what interests them. And being a very sensitive and a media-savvy person, he senses the demand. This is a process based on demand, not supply.

And what you are seeing on the demand side is that young people, at the age of 20-25-30, who grew up with no knowledge of the Soviet Union, with no nostalgia for it, who actually know nothing except Putin and believe that they already live in a normal country -- they don't understand why in a normal country with bicycle lanes, with good restaurants, with possibilities to travel abroad, why some riot police need to come and beat them with clubs and put them in prison. This is also the reason why Putin and the Kremlin are cautious in using repression. Because it's actually very dangerous. Because after all, you can lose the sympathy of the population and lose legitimacy overnight. And the fact that they are backtracking is very, very significant; even more significant than the fact that they use repression. Again, historical parallels shouldn't be overdone but they shouldn't be ignored, either.

Look, the Soviet Union was a very powerful system and an extremely repressive system with a much more powerful KGB and a much larger army. In December 1990, Gorbachev, under the influence of the KGB and fearing that he was losing power, made his famous swing to the right. And the power ministries, the KGB for a short period of time seized the

initiative, and trying to show their influence, brought troops in Vilnius in January 1991, and then organized the State Committee on the State of Emergency (GKChP) in August 1991. The result of that was an instant loss of legitimacy. The headlines in Russian, in Soviet media at the time blared, “This is a regime trying to cling to power”.

Use of repression is a dangerous game to play if you are not certain that you can unveil mass repression on the scale of China on Tiananmen Square in 1989. So what I am seeing is actually a swap, a switch of roles, if you like: what used to be the “other” Russia, the Russian of human right activists, opposition, all of that is becoming the “main” Russia. And Putin’s Russia is becoming the “other” Russia. And this is a process which is hard to measure in polls, although all the indications are there. Sakharov, one of the greatest human minds of the 20th century, was right, although he was considered to be very naive when he reflected on the convergence of the socialist and the communist systems. It was precisely because he was a great physicist and because he was not a hostage to ideological concepts that he looked much deeper at human rights, dignity and so on, regardless of which party you are in.

But let’s say he was naive, as Solzhenitsyn had argued; let’s say that yes, perhaps he was too idealistic... I would like to quote one document and I will end with that. Sir Andrew Wood [former British ambassador to Moscow] knows it probably by heart. I think this text, which was relevant then, even if its value was not entirely appreciated, is relevant today as well. It is dated February 22nd, 1946 and written by [American diplomat and historian] George Kennan and is known as the “Long Telegram”. In it, Kennan outlines for the first time his perspective on the USSR. If you substitute “Soviet” for “Russia,” the text would not lose its relevance.

*USSR still lives in antagonistic “capitalist encirclement” with which in the long run there can be no permanent peaceful coexistence. As stated by Stalin in 1927 to a delegation of American workers: “In course of further development of international revolution there will emerge two centers of world significance: a socialist center and capitalist one. Capitalist world is beset with internal conflicts, inherent in nature of capitalist society. These conflicts are insoluble by means of peaceful compromise.”*<sup>6</sup>

Hence, wrote Kennan, the Soviet Union will explore any opportunity to weaken the West, to project its power and to cultivate a sense of uncertainty. After this he came to the most important part. First, he explained why the Soviet Union is not going to attack the United States. And then, the second and the most important:

*Second, please note that premises on which this party line is based are for most part simply not true.*

This was written in 1946, when Stalin was at the height of his power after the war.

*Experience has shown that peaceful and mutually profitable coexistence of capitalist and socialist states is entirely possible. Basic internal conflicts in advanced countries are no longer primarily those arising out of capitalist ownership of means of production, but are ones arising from advanced urbanism and industrialism as such.*

And then the document says that the Soviet people want exactly the same thing as Western people living in a capitalist society. They want the freedom to travel, they want to live in peace, they want to have a normal life in their own country.

If I have intrigued you, please go and read the whole text. I do think it is still an incredibly relevant document both in its analysis and in its recipes, one of which ends with the Kennan's notable phrase that worst way of coping with our adversary is to copy him, to copy his way, which is, I think, is a great risk today, particularly in the United States. But my sense is that Russia is in a very interesting junction. I have no idea what's going to come off. I have no idea how big the disruptions are going to be and they are likely to be quite significant because of the level of damage that Putin has done. But I think that Russia in that sense is not in isolation and we are going to see those disruptions not just in Russia but around Europe. We are already seeing them in a lot of countries including the United Kingdom. So, we do need to sort of hold on tight. All I can see is the forces that are driving demand on the streets of Moscow are not the forces that are either compatible or desirable for what Vladimir Putin has been doing. Because basically he has been trying, the best he can, for the past 20 years, to hold on to that system which started to emerge in 1989. My sense is that this big political cycle is coming to an end and this is definitely time to build bridges and reread Kennan and Sakharov.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v06/d475>



I will try to be brief. We have had presentations from the rest of the panel, and need to make sure there is time for a Question and Answer discussion. Three of my colleagues have been relatively encouraged by the implications of recent events for the future of Russia. Perhaps it is a matter of temperament, but like Mikhail Shishkin I think that the way forward may well be very rough.

Russia is in a state of paralysis, a sort of frozen anarchy. Its governmental institutions have been made redundant under Putin, and incapable of independent action. The Kremlin has no effective way of dealing with the country's economic, societal or political problems. Nor have Putin and his circle yet decided how to meet the constitutional challenge of prolonging his rule or replacing him when his term ends in 2024. The only language they have is the language of force – whether domestic or international. It is therefore possible that once increasing repression begins to fail, perhaps even before 2024, Russia will suffer more like Venezuela is suffering now under Maduro than did Chile after Pinochet, when its institutions were remained effective enough to revive working democratic possibilities.

It is also true that the expressions of dismay, and hope, and optimism, and lack of fear that have been shown on the streets of Moscow and beyond it this summer demonstrate a reawakening of civil society in Russia. That is of course important. It reflects a current of opinion that stemmed from Putin's choice on his reinstatement as President in 2012 to reject even cautious economic and by implication political reform on his inauguration that year in favour of foreign adventures and domestic repression. The more that it has become

obvious that he and his immediate circle are concerned above all with keeping their hold on power the more trust in him and his policies has been undermined. That has been particularly true over 2018 and 2019, with the pension reform decision crystallising public resentment.

It is certainly true, on the positive side, that one result of Putin's comparative loss of public charisma, together with the supposition that he will hang on after 2024, that there is now more discussion whether public or covert of the options that Russia should think about in the way it's governed, in the way it manages its economy, and the way it should relate to the rest of the world, and Europe in particular. That is there. That is a process of essential value for beginning to tackle issues relating to Russia's future rule. But the Kremlin and its supporters and its instruments are determined to suppress it. One cannot tell how far and for how long they will succeed.

There is a further difficulty in the way of constructive evolution from authoritarian rule to rule accountable to Russia's citizens. If you ask Navalny or the people who work with him or Khodorkovsky or other people what they think about Russia, they generally say the same sort of things: we have got to have proper laws, the government has got to be accountable and we have to review the way we manage our economy, we have to tackle corruption and so on and so forth. Quite so, but to use a Russian phrase "kak konkretno"? It's quite hard to see how Russia is actually going to tackle the problems inherent in achieving these laudible objectives. How are you for instance going to reform the judicial system? That is a key objective. How are you going to discover and appoint trustworthy judicial or other government officials? Or define the way they should work? Corrupted or self interested Russian citizens have a strong present interest in preserving their present power. That goes for people of lesser standing as well as people with Russia-wide power. Also, the judicial system is made up of judges who are used to taking orders on getting really important things like imprisoning Jehovah's Witnesses and they do it because that's what they do. I don't deny that there are certain lawyers in Russia and probably judges in Russia who have a different view, but how you get out of the morass if the law ecosystem isn't implemented properly, I don't know.

The same general questions as to how to bring about evolutionary change in a Russia under centralised and compromised authoritarian rule apply to other governing bodies. The security organs in general should be brought to focus on public order not licensed exploitation. If you are a successor to the current ministry of justice, are you seriously going to be someone who would place protection of the innocent above the interests of the powerful or to hide inconvenient cases and so on and so forth? If you are going to reform the economy you have to, first of all, make sure that the owners of major economic slices – and those controlling smaller ones too – are accountable to some autonomous and objective agencies or conditions which are yet to be established. You have also to face a very difficult issue that the great swathes of the Russian economy are obsolete. Russia needs

some creative disruption. Nobody likes that. I remember how difficult that was in Britain under Thatcher for instance, a country where we do have established law. I don't see how the general ambitions of honourable people committed to liberal reforms in Russia are going to achieve them in concrete form. I don't say it's impossible, I just don't see how it is going to happen easily in Russia. Particularly, I think the institutions to channel it and to channel political discourse are not there at present.

Turning lastly to the general question of the attitude of Western governments in particular towards Russia in the context which we have been considering they look, inevitably, into international things first and they don't readily look at what's happening inside Russia as the cause ultimately of, for example, Russia's seizure of significant parts of Ukraine. They look at that as a problem to be solved by negotiation, from the external point of view, with Russia or contained as a threat by outside forces. I don't think that many of our governments have thought how they might help resolve the internal problems of Russia should the Russian government ever again ask them to do so. In principle, if ever there might be a Russian government with radically different attitudes and domestic and for that matter foreign policies, that might well change. But in present practice the West has an important part to play in being less receptive to housing and profiting from criminal funds from Russia. Not necessarily that easy to stop overnight but it is something we should be aiming at resolving. But I don't think at present the West has concrete plans as to how to help a Russia which at least possibly might one day venture on genuine democratic change.

To sum up, I think it's encouraging that there is an awakening of civil society in Russia. I think it is necessary that there should be a conversation within Russia among Russians as to what sort of a country they really want to be and how they can achieve it. And it's up to us as friends of the Russian people, if not friends of the Russian government at present, to think of ways which we can work with that and encourage a dialog into which we could play some part. There's quite probably a role in that for countries such as yours who have been a part of the Soviet Union and freed yourselves and have also changed a great deal within Lithuania for the way things are done. I think there is a role there for you to play, a certain role for us to play in trying to help Ukraine, they are on the same path and hope that that will set some sort of indication to Russia which would help itself to heal itself. I don't think we can do it ourselves. And I think it might be a long road. And the danger of nasty collapse is unfortunately, to my mind, at least as great as the possibility of bankable or rapid progress in a democratic direction. I can't believe that Putin will want to go to 2024. If he does, I'm not sure who will shelter him from his friends and enemies. So, just to end where I began, I tend towards a pessimism that is more on the side of the Shishkin analysis than it is on the side of the Ostrovsky analysis. I wish it were otherwise.



**Vyacheslav Bakhmin** is a human rights activist, former political prisoner. Since 1989, he is a member of the Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG). In 1991-95, Bakhmin headed the Department for International Humanitarian and Cultural Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. From 1995 to 2003, he was Executive Director of the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) in Russia. Since 2004 he worked as a consultant for C. S. Mott Foundation in Russia. Bakhmin is a member of the organizing Committee of the All-Russian Civil Forum, Chairman of the Expert Council of the Polytechnic Museum Foundation, Chairman of the Sakharov Center, co-Chairman of the Moscow State University, as well as a member of the expert councils of various donor charitable programs and organizations. Author of the books “Foundations in Russia” (2004) and “Design and Implementation of Grant Competition” (2016).

**Yevgeni Gindilis** is a graduate of Tisch School in 1994. He worked for television broadcast stations in the US and Russia. Since 1998 he worked as producer and head of international projects for NTV-Profit. In 2004 he founded TVINDIE Film Production, since 2009 he is the Head of CentEast Moscow; since 2012 - Executive Director of the Red Square Screenings film market. Gindilis is a member of the European Film Academy and Kinosouyz. He is the film director of “Electing Russia”, which he made with Kirill Rogov.

**Arkady Ostrovsky** is Russia and Eastern Europe editor for The Economist. Prior to this role, he was the Moscow Bureau Chief for The Economist reporting on the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine among many other subjects. He joined the paper in March 2007 after 10 years with the Financial Times where he covered Russian politics and business, including the Yukos Affair. His articles were among the first to warn of the resurgence of the security state under Putin. At The Economist, Arkady also writes about Russia-US relations, European security, Russia and China, Ukraine, Georgia and other former Soviet republics. He is the author of the 2016 Orwell Prize winning book *The Invention of Russia: The Journey from Gorbachev’s Freedom to Putin’s War* published in 2015 by Atlantic Book in the UK and in 2016 by Viking in the US. He is regular contributor to radio and television programs around the world, including the BBC and NPR. Arkady holds a doctorate degree in English Literature (University of Cambridge, 1998) and has contributed to the first Cambridge History of Russian Theatre as well as to collections of essays on theatre history published in the America, UK, France, Russia and Brazil. Arkady’s translation of Tom Stoppard’s trilogy, “The Coast of Utopia” and “Rock’n’Roll” have been published and staged in Russia.

**Mikhail Shishkin** was born in 1961 in Moscow. In 1995, for family reasons he moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where he worked as a teacher and translator at the Immigration Department. Mikhail Shishkin is the only writer to have won all three of the most prestigious Russian literary awards: the Russian Booker Prize for the novel “The Taking of

Izmail” (2000), the Russian National Best-Seller Prize (2005) for the novel “Maidenhair” and the Big Book Prize (2010). His books are translated into 30 languages. Shishkin has published articles in The New York Times, Le Monde, The Guardian and others. Since 2011, he lives near Basel.

**Andrew Wood** was a British diplomat between 1961 and 2000, posted to Moscow 1964-66, 1979-82, and from 1995 to 2000 as Ambassador. He also served in Washington 1967-70 and 1989-92, and in Belgrade 1975-79 and from 1985 to 1989 as Ambassador. He worked with a number of UK based businesses with interests in Russia and other formerly Soviet countries between 2000 and 2014. He has been an Associate Fellow of Chatham House for the past dozen years, written a number of papers on questions related to Russia, and appeared on various media over that time.

The Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development unites state-of-the-art academic research on developments in Eastern Europe and the former USSR with existing multi-disciplinary expert knowledge at Vytautas Magnus University of past and current political and social developments in the region.

The Centre stimulates multi-disciplinary and multi-national cooperation between VMU and its partners in other countries and allows researchers to make use of its extensive archival holdings of materials on political freedom, repression and the opposition in the region in order to gain a better understanding of the processes that are likely to have an impact on the current situation.

The Research Centre informs and educates both the academic and the non-academic community, while maintaining a special interest in reaching out to younger generations which lack sufficient knowledge of the past to understand the present situation and its likely impact on, and implications for, the future.

### The center:

- Organizes public events, seminars and round-table discussions, including annual commemorations of the work and moral authority of Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov;
- Supports research and facilitate the publication of research reports, monographs and other writings that contribute to the aims of the Centre;
- Collects published materials and archival holdings that are related to the goals of the Centre and allow researchers to access them during their work;
- Contributes to the development of a democratic society based on the rule of law and support those who encounter opposition from non-democratic and non-liberal forces.



ANDREI SAKHAROV  
RESEARCH CENTRE  
FOR DEMOCRATIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
at Vytautas Magnus University

*Andrei Sakharov Research Center for Democratic Development*  
*Executive Director: Robert van Voren: [rvvoren@sakharovcenter.eu](mailto:rvvoren@sakharovcenter.eu)*  
*Office Manager: Dainius Genys: [dgenys@sakharovcenter.eu](mailto:dgenys@sakharovcenter.eu)*  
*S. Daukanto 27-304, 44249 Kaunas, Lithuania*  
*<http://www.sakharovcenter-vdu.eu>*