

1982**Moscow Independent Peace Group****Citation:**

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Summary:

Pamphlet from European Nuclear Disarmament with two first-hand accounts of a Scandinavian women's peace march through Moscow that visited with an independent Soviet peace group. Includes details on the process and END's internal debate on how to interact with the emerging movement, along with publications of the peace group itself, Western journalistic sources, official documents, and photographs.

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END SPECIAL REPORT:

MOSCOW INDEPENDENT PEACE GROUP

Jean Stead * Danielle Grünberg * Documents



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Moscow's Police Arrest Founder of Peace Group

MOSCOW, Aug. 6 (AP) — The police arrested a founder of the Soviet Union's only independent peace group today and put him in a psychiatric hospital against his will, fellow group members reported.

They said Sergei Batovrin, a 25-year-old artist who spent time in a psychiatric hospital seven years ago, was taken from the apartment of Yuri Medvedkov, a fellow group member, shortly after noon. Colleagues said the police accused him of evading military service.

The peace group, numbering about 15 intellectuals, has faced continuous police harassment since announcing its formation in June.

8/7/82

New York Times, 8 July 1982

When the news first came to us early in June that an independent peace group had been formed in Moscow, and that it was sending urgent signals to the peace movements in the West, we were presented with difficulties. What should be our response?

The news came to us through the Western press, and sometimes through sources hostile to the peace movement. The first announcement of the group was made to a press conference by word of mouth in the flat of one of the group.

As the news trickled out, it appeared that several of the small group were 'refuseniks'—that is, they had applied in recent years for permits to emigrate from the USSR and their applications had been refused. The young artist, Sergei Batovrin, who helped to start the group, was the son of a Soviet diplomat at the United Nations and had spent some of his school years in New York.

This suggested one possible 'profile': a small group of refuseniks and dissidents, who were being made use of by Cold War propagandists in the West in order to deflate the Soviet leaders' professions of peaceful intent, to stir up dissension in the Western peace movement (and especially in the United States), and to provide a distraction at the time of the Peace March of the Scandinavian Women from Stockholm to Minsk.

Of course we had to take account of this possible profile. This kind of Cold War propaganda game has been going on for years, and on both sides, often defeating the intentions of sincere and disinterested people. At the same time we asked ourselves—How could a new, unofficial group get its message out without recourse to the Western press? And why on earth should the Soviet authorities make such a fuss about a small group of this kind? If they had played it cool, what possible harm could have been done to Soviet-American relations? (A gesture of toleration would in fact have improved the Soviet image in the West.) The 'provocation'

which Soviet official sources droned on about only arose because they themselves commenced to harass and slander the new group. Who are the 'hooligans' and provocateurs? A young artist (who had just had eighty-eight of his peace paintings seized by the KGB) and his friends? Or the security agents who have been pushing them about?

These considerations were strengthened when we received news of the programme of the group. But then an event of great importance took place. Jean Stead, the Assistant Editor of The Guardian—a newspaper distinguished in the past two years by its well-informed treatment of the work of the Western peace movement, and by the space it has afforded for discussion of disarmament—had accompanied the Scandinavian Peacemarch on the full length of its course, sending back a series of valuable reports. Also with the March was Danielle Grünberg, a British marcher of part-Danish parentage—an active member of the Somerset peace movement, whose sponsors on the march included END, CND, and CND Western region.

Danielle Grünberg and Jean Stead took the opportunity, when the March passed through Moscow, to visit the group. Their accounts are the heart of this pamphlet. Jean Stead's account is placed in the context of a retrospective view of the success (but also the limitations) of the Peacemarch, and also includes an analysis of the composition and aims of the official Soviet Peace Committee. It is a revised text of her article in The Guardian of August 13, 1982. Danielle Grünberg's account appears here for the first time.

END and CND have received many enquiries about this new initiative. We have decided to present a selection of the documents available to us now, in chronological sequence, to enable readers to form their own judgments. The documents drawn upon here come from very many sources—some which might be thought to be 'Cold War', some of an impartial stance, and some from the peace movement itself. We thank all the institutions, individuals, and newspapers drawn upon: our particular thanks to The Guardian for permission to republish Jean Stead's major article and to the New Yorker for the excerpt from 'Talk of the Town'.

11 Russians Open Antinuclear Drive

By JOHN F. BURNS

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, June 4 — The Soviet Union, a strong backer of peace campaigns in Western countries, found itself today with an embryonic peace movement of its own that aims to be as independent of Government control as groups in the United States and Western Europe.

The 11 members of the group who announced its formation at a news conference for Western reporters said their goal was a lowering of the danger of nuclear war without prejudice to the interests of the Soviet Union or the United States. They said that since this was also the professed object of the Soviet authorities they saw no reason why their initiative should be stifled.

But a spokesman for the founders, Sergei Batovrin, a 25-year-old artist, made it plain that the impetus for the group's establishment flowed from their perception of the official Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, incapable of advancing disarmament

proposals not previously sanctioned by the Kremlin.

Although the members of the group are not dissidents, Mr. Batovrin said, they believe that it is important that "the enormous creative potential" of ordinary people in the Soviet Union be harnessed in the quest for peace.

Street Canvass Planned

Mr. Batovrin said the group intended to canvass for new members among friends and by approaching people on the street, and to develop new ideas to complement the Kremlin's official "peace program." Another member of the group, Vladimir Fleishgaker, an engineer, acknowledged that this was a challenge of a kind to the authorities since it was "the Soviet tradition that nobody expresses his opinion until he is asked for it."

Nonetheless, Mr. Batovrin said the group hoped for tolerance. "We do not want to be a counterweight to the authorities, but to work alongside them," he said. "If they understand us correctly they will not apply repressive measures to us. Our press always says

that everyone should take part in the peace movement, and we see no contradiction between that and what we are doing."

The group's anxiety that officials might see the matter differently was reflected in the care that was taken to summon reporters by word of mouth, avoiding use of telephones. K.G.B. surveillance that is commonly evident when foreign reporters meet with dissidents or other private groups was not apparent outside the cramped suburban apartment where the news conference was held, but past experience does not augur well for the group.

Generally, the Kremlin suppresses any private group that becomes active in an area of state interest, and the practice has been starkly evident in matters involving disarmament.

The unofficial group founded today signaled its desire to remain politically impartial by adopting a symbol that combines a Western-style "ban the bomb" emblem with a dove, the device of the official Soviet disarmament committee.

New York Times, 5 June 1982

Here are more details on the Independent Peace Group in Moscow. . .

So far they have made available three documents:

1. An Appeal to the Moscow City Council (Mossovot) suggesting to proclaim Moscow a Nuclear Free Zone.
2. An Appeal to the governments of the USA and USSR to stop all the nuclear tests.
3. Programme of Actions aimed at improving trust between the peoples of the USA and USSR, containing nine points:
 1. Organisation of an exchange programme for school children of the two countries.
 2. Open TV discussions between representatives of the two governments shown in full in both countries with possibility for the people to question the speakers by the 'phone.
 3. A common programme of peace propaganda obligatory in the Soviet and American schools and text-books.
 4. Opening of a Soviet Culture Centre in Washington and of American culture Centre in Moscow with a free access for the people.
 5. A creation of the Soviet-American mediatory bureau for those seeking to re-unite their families or to help those wishing to marry.
 6. A creation of the Soviet-American Medical centre for conducting joint research.
 7. A creation of a mediating organisation for those wishing to correspond (A Pen-Friends Bureau).
 8. Regular joint Soviet-American space flights and general cooperation in the field.
 9. A creation of the Soviet-American Institute of Public Opinion with authority to conduct public opinion polls independently in both countries, on the questions relating to peace and mutual trust.

Further on, the members of the Group publicised their telephone numbers inviting people to call them during weekends if they have any other suggestions. This latter was a reason why the Soviet authorities have cut their telephones so quickly.

(This information was provided by a Brussels-based organisation 'USSR News Brief on Human Rights').

Please circulate

American Friends Service Committee
U.S.A.

Moscow, July 8 1982

Dear colleagues,

We, supporters of the trust creation between the Soviet Union and the United States, have advanced on June 4 1982 our *'Appeal to the governments and the public of the USSR and the USA'*. We have got many proposals from the Soviet citizens after this call about starting grassroot initiatives for the trust creation. People understand that it is important to eradicate hatred as the feeding material of arm races.

Currently, we are trying to introduce our proposals into the activities of the *'Peace-82'* march (it starts in Sweden to be in Moscow by the end of this July). There are handicaps in our work, such as house arrests to isolate us. It was the case on June 27 1982, the day of our planned peace manifestation in Moscow. Please be vigilant regarding our fate during the Moscow phase of the *'Peace-82'* march.

In our specific conditions, with the lack of prior independent public activism, it is literally a vital matter for our cause to borrow from the experience of your peace efforts. Now our supporters here are in a dynamic phase of self-education; much depends on manifestations of solidarity.

We would welcome any forms of exploratory or working contacts. Please arrange messages and personal visits, circulate our documentation and comment it. Newsmen know how to find us, it is easy in fact. But now it is really urgent for the colleagues in the peace cause **TO START KNOW EACH OTHER.**

Various strata of the Soviet society are represented among our supporters: scientists and workers, artists and writers, clergy and laity, Russians, Jews and other ethnic minorities, etc.

Personal contacts from abroad seem to be the key element of moral support in the present initial phase of our activities. Obscurantists who are against us here can't suffocate us under the umbrella of publicity and visits. International solidarity as well as our own strict law-abiding conduct have already

resulted in some victories. On the wave of mass protests there are indications of the end of the house arrest for our colleague Sergei Batovrin, an artist and a co-author of the initial 'appeal' (the arrest is almost a month long).

There is a lot of important work ahead. We expect that some of our peace proposals may be acceptable for realisation by grassroot efforts, and not in too distant future. Your help is critical in it. To begin with, we have fixed August 6 1982 as THE DAY FOR OUR PUBLIC MANIFESTATION PLUS FOR ROUND TABLE TALKS ON THE TRUST ESTABLISHING. We invite you to join us: by messages, by similar activities in your cities, or, perhaps, by delegating participants who happen to be in Moscow on that day.

We hope to hear from you.

With our friendly handshakes and our open hearts

The group for establishing trust between the USSR and the USA.

[A list of sixteen names and addresses follows]:

P.S. The postal services are not always reliable and it is imperative for us to send several copies of this letter in various ways.

THE PEACEMARCH AND THE MOSCOW INDEPENDENT GROUP

Jean Stead

It was the late Eugenie Constantinovitch Fyodorov, first man across the North Pole, friend of President Brezhnev, president of the Soviet Peace Committee and Hero of the Soviet Union, who agreed last November to allow a group of Norwegian women to march against nuclear weapons through Soviet cities.

By the time five of the women arrived in Moscow in February to complete the arrangements, they were no longer so welcome. Fyodorov had died and the march, it seemed, was no longer on. Then, just before they were about to leave for home in defeat, the decision was reversed. Yuri Zhukov, political commentator of *Pravda* and a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, had won the battle to become the new president—and had used the idea of the women's peace march as one of his election programme attractions.

This illustration of the conflict within the Soviet Peace Committee is typical of the dilemma it faces in trying to relate to the Western European peace movement. The Peace Committee has only 450 members and in the past has been the final resting home for distinguished spacemen and women, for Arctic and Antarctic explorers, actors, writers and scientists, and for every distinguished name—including Shostakovitch—needing a post with honour that is not too onerous.

It is a sort of Russian version of the Royal Society, attached to the Academy of Science, a recognition that since the catastrophe of the Second World War nothing is more important to the average citizen than not repeating it.

But in 1979, the year when the NATO countries decided to modernise their theatre weapons and place cruise missiles in Western Europe—which alone would be capable of

delivering 5,500 Hiroshimas into the Soviet Union—a decision was made in the Soviet Union to bring the Peace Committee into the front line of international politics—in fact, to update it.

The praesidium of the Academy of Science decided with the Peace Committee, to found a scientific council on Research into the problems of Peace and Disarmament. Research is also carried out through the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, which has 200 members, one of them Fyodorov's son Yuri. The creation of a non-nuclear Nordic and northern Russian zone, the examination of United States and Canadian affairs through a special institute, the problems of disposal of nuclear arms under a disarmament programme are among the subjects of full-time research and academic publications.

At the same time, it was decided that the World Peace Council, founded in 1950 and later largely shrugged off by CND and the Committee of 100 because of its overtly Soviet bias, should be given a new image. It has a new secretary, Professor Tair Tairov, a cosmopolitan international lawyer, well informed on the West. Based in Helsinki, he was mainly responsible for securing the visas for the Norwegian women's march, and for smoothing out the arguments that the Scandinavians got involved in, both among themselves and with the Soviet Peace Committee.

When the five Norwegians returned home last February, they invited delegations from Sweden, Denmark and Finland to join them on the march that they were organising.

Most of the marchers—about 250—were liberal professional women, mostly Labour-voting with a few Communists from Finland. With them were about 20 men, mostly academics and students. Many of them were abysmally ignorant about the Soviet Union, but they were well boned-up on nuclear defence strategy and were able to argue forcefully the case for unilateral disarmament. Scandinavians have no nuclear weapons.

It was felt to be something of a compliment that the Soviets thought it worthwhile to put five of the leading members of the Soviet Peace Committee with the march right from its start in Stockholm, including the organising

secretary, Grigory Lokshyn, a man who would not look out of place as a trade union negotiator in this country.

The Russians found it difficult at first to deal with the women, who insisted on democratic participation and lengthy meetings on every detail of the pre-planning and on an inquest into every occasion when the Soviets appeared to break the agreements they had made on how the march should be conducted. The Danes even refused to have a leader, so that there was no-one for Lokshyn to negotiate with. But during the hot, thirsty marches, the long train rides, and the nights on the bare school floors in Finland, an uneasy sort of trust began to form between the Russians and the Scandinavians.

The Russians developed a respect for the women, who were uncompromising in their arguments, and uncomplaining about the physical hardship. But they also allowed them an unusual degree of tolerance in their eccentricities. For there is no doubt that the Soviets are pinning most of their hopes for an end to the nuclear arms race on the effectiveness of the Western European peace movement. Their domestic resources are seriously drained by weapons expenditure. They feel surrounded and threatened by the American bases. 'There are no Soviet military bases round the United States, but there are 2,000 hostile bases round our country. That is why we have to play with black figures', said Yakov Lomko, the deputy chairman of the Soviet Union of Journalists, at a meeting with a marchers' delegation in Moscow.

The weeping on the streets at the sight of the peace banners was testimony to the state of shock which much of the older generation is still in, many decades after the German occupation and 20 million deaths of the last war. They seem barely able to grasp the idea of another war, certainly not one with nuclear weapons. There are no Panorama programmes or newspaper reports to present or discuss the notion of unilateral nuclear disarmament. The food shortages (particularly acute this year), the housing difficulties, the deprivation of not being able to travel overseas, are all more important preoccupations, the Scandinavians discovered. One 20-year-old Norwegian student met an architect standing on the pavement during the march in

Leningrad and followed up his invitation to phone him. She went to his house for supper with his family—a fairly lavish event, like all Russian hospitality. There they explained that they were happy to join in demonstrations for peace, which everyone wanted. But they explained that people were far more concerned about getting more food and an easier life than in getting rid of the SS20s.

One English teacher in Moscow, also a sympathetic spectator, confessed, 'The truth is we are just too lazy to think about things that are wrong here. It is easier to ignore them because everyday life is so difficult.' A devotee of Iris Murdoch, she exemplified that curious Russian blend of extensive education and lack of curiosity about the world outside.

In spite of their research and their meetings with the Scandinavians, the Soviets still do not understand the Western peace movement. They see it as a movement that can be used to persuade NATO to call off the modernisation programme. They are not able to grasp that it is essentially a protest campaign that is joined in strength by the ecological movement. The last thing that Russians could cope with is a similar free-thinking ecological movement in their own country—yet they now have their own sizeable pollution problems.

So they are caught in a dilemma. They welcome a powerful peace movement, but only if it is like the Soviet Peace Committee which has an establishment voice and echoes anti-American opinions. In the Soviet Union there are over 100 local committees in various regions, all of them led by prominent public figures but, so far as is known, reflecting only standard views. It is rather like a peace movement which has its main sympathetic ties to the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Energy. Yet it is a movement of people whose feelings of fear of another war—feelings that the Scandinavians began at last to understand—make them glad that the Russians have nuclear weapons as a defence against the Americans. It was the United States they continually reminded the Scandinavian women who were the first to arm themselves with atomic weapons and the only people to actually drop atomic bombs.

The march, though it sometimes resembled a cultural delegation or a discussion group, can be considered a success—if for no other reason than it held out a hand of friendship with no strings attached. Its main failure lay in not securing a meeting with the 16 leaders of the unofficial peace movement in Moscow. This included two distinguished professors who were sent to a detention centre for ‘alcoholics and hooligans’ for 15 days while the marchers were in town, and two others who had been under intermittent house arrest.

Eva Nordland—an initiator of the march and a sociology lecturer at Oslo University—suggested a meeting and was told by members of the Soviet Peace Committee that it might be possible. These, after all, were a group people would be wanting to know about when they got home. Were they genuine or were they ‘plants’ to bring discord to the march? Grigory Lokshyn, the secretary of the Peace Committee, told them that they were drunks, ‘anti-socials’, provocateurs working for the CIA. At a stormy meeting just before leaving Moscow, two members of the Soviet Peace Committee gave different explanations for the arrests, one of them being that one of the professors had hit a conductor on a bus. The odds are that probably no one knew the exact details.

In the end, and time being short, the women decided not to seek a meeting with the unofficial group. They were under pressure, they were tired—but it seemed like a mistake then, and it still does. The Scandinavians put neutrality first in all questions except the banning of nuclear weapons, and it was this belief in the importance of neutrality that explained all their actions, or lack of them.

In the end, only one member of the march went to see the dissidents—Danielle Grünberg, half Danish, living in Britain and sponsored on the march by END and CND. The ten KGB men outside in cars were obviously on guard.

Mrs Olga Medvedkov is the wife of Professor Yuri Medvedkov. He was chief of the laboratory of human ecology at the Institute of Geography of the Academy of Science, formerly at the Chief Ecology Unit of the World Health Organisation in Geneva, and then subsequently in detention. She was the spokesman for the five members of the group.

They were living together in a single flat for security. The KGB men had told them to go no further than the end of the road. They made three points—that they were not dissidents, that they agreed with the Soviet policy on nuclear disarmament, and that they had been surprised and shocked by the KGB searches and seizure of documents which followed their launch of a petition on June 4. Their proposals, sent at the time to the Soviet Peace Committee, had received no acknowledgement or reply.

They asked us for contacts in the West European peace movement and seemed strangely naive about the varying politics of the organisation they had been in touch with. They said, for instance, that they had been most grateful for the interest in them shown by the 'Voice of America'.

Their aim was to secure greater trust between the Soviet Union and the United States, through the creation of an international independent peace group; the establishing of international groups of scientists for research and analysis on disarmament proposals; the abstention from mutual accusations from both sides; the guaranteeing of open exchange of opinion between Soviet people in the spheres of disarmament, the organisation of joint TV programmes, and the creation of a non-governmental Soviet-American commission to research public opinion. They also advocated the notion that Moscow itself should be declared a nuclear-free zone.

A group of ten of the world's leading geographers, two of them from Britain, met Dr Medvedkov when they were in Moscow for a conference in June. He was highly distinguished in his field, but they found him in severe trouble with the authorities because, he said, he had applied for an exit visa with his wife, who is Jewish. He had lost his job, had his professorship taken away from him, had been prevented from attending the conference and told them he was about to be stripped of his degrees. He was no longer allowed to teach. Dr Derek Diamond, of the London School of Economics, who went to see him at the flat of a friend, says that because his special interest was social geography, which would involve him comparing the quality of environment in rich and poor areas, he would automatically be in

disfavour. 'We were very disturbed by the way he was being treated. He just wanted out.'

Although the peace campaign had just been launched, he did not talk of it to Dr Diamond. But he told him that he thought the world was in terrible danger of nuclear war, that the Soviet Union was re-arming too heavily, and that he and some others were appealing to the Soviet Peace Committee for action.

In Geneva, Dr Medvedkov did research in epidemiology, now part of the communicable diseases division of the WHO. Colleagues in London who have worked with him on and off during the past ten years were surprised to hear he had been campaigning for peace. One, Professor David Smith, of Queen Mary College, University of London, said he had never mentioned the subject during two evening-long discussions in Moscow last June, during a conference of international geographers. I told the Peace Committee that we had been to see the group, and one of the Scandinavian leaders of the march said subsequently that they thought the Soviet attitude to the march changed completely from that day. It was the last day in Moscow—the rest of the party had been on a river boat trip. Certainly, for the first time, men were obviously on guard all over the Moscow hotel foyer. Women flying in to join the march were held up for three hours while all luggage was searched. Guards were obvious on the station platforms, within the trains, and on the marches for the remaining five days of the tour. The feeling of freedom and open exchange had gone.

Why had this happened? Had the KGB decided that things had gone too far and taken the matter out of the hands of the Soviet Peace Committee and into their own? Or had the Committee decided that for themselves? Had the women's march wandered into the crossfire of a situation they did not even know about? Why was this unofficial group of academics not allowed to join the march as they wanted to, when the Soviet Peace Committee had said repeatedly that all citizens were free to crusade for peace?

There are, as yet, no answers. The unofficial group said they had not timed their launching date to coincide with the march, but had sent copies of their proposals to the

Women for Peace headquarters in Oslo. The Norwegians said they had never received them. They returned home with two suspicions in their minds. One was that the reason for the importance of Professor Medvedkov was that, as an ecologist, he was probably already in trouble for campaigning on the dangers of nuclear pollution. The other was that even though the unofficial group appeared sincere in wanting to link up with other peace groups in the West, they might be being used by anti-Soviet organisations without their knowledge.

The leaders of the march said they had already had experience of attempts to disrupt their peace march from Copenhagen to Paris last year. The Russians may be anxious to stop independent peace campaigners coming into the open but the NATO countries also see their growing peace movements as a formidable threat to the stationing of cruise missiles in Europe next year—and are likely to do whatever they can to discredit them.

PEACE MARCH '82

Danielle R. Grünberg

'Why are you marching in the West? Go to Moscow!', said the critics of last year's Peace March from Copenhagen to Paris. This was what started off the Nordic Peace March '82, organised by Women for Peace from Scandinavia, a three-week journey covering 3,000 miles by foot, boat and train, from Stockholm (via Helsinki, Leningrad and Moscow) to Minsk.

The main slogans: 'No to Nuclear Weapons in Europe, East and West!', 'No to Nuclear Weapons in the World!', 'Yes, to Disarmament and Peace!' had been easily agreed on between the Scandinavian women and the Russians. More difficult to accommodate was the Scandinavian women's wish to end the march in Moscow. 'This', the Russians said, 'would be seen as a direct threat to the Soviet Government', and so the march ended in Minsk instead. At a later stage in the negotiations the Russians insisted on linking Peace March '82 with a march organised by them, from Moscow to Vienna, but finally appeared to give in on this point. And so a compromise was reached.

The Russians had laid on a special 'Peace Train' for the long stretches between towns as there was no way 3,000 miles could be walked in three weeks.

The first meeting with Soviet people, in the small border town of Vyborg, was rapturous, warm and full of music, dancing and flowers. From then on the pattern was set. On arrival in the towns, mass meetings were held, mostly with 'invited people', followed by a march to the hotel where participants were staying (at their own cost).

Leningrad, was for me a particularly memorable occasion. A scorching hot Sunday in July, with many citizens obviously away enjoying the weekend pleasures of the countryside—and yet as we began walking up the central Kirov Street—

the 300 Scandinavians, forming the core of the march, seemed suddenly to disappear into a sea of Russian people—thronging the width and breadth of the street. Some older women, less inclined to participate, stood watching by the side of the pavement—crying at the sight of the peace banners, reviving the memory of their dead relatives. ‘The people of our country want peace’, said a Russian woman, ‘but they feel surrounded and threatened by the United States. We only have nuclear weapons to protect ourselves.’ Conversation rarely reached beyond this point.

In Moscow the spontaneity seemed to vanish and the marching was shorter and much subdued. Western correspondents, who initially claimed the march would never reach Moscow, now stated that Moscovites had not been informed of the marchers’ arrival. There were certainly fewer people in evidence and more plain clothes police. But whatever the immediate shortcomings, the march was a breakthrough. It was the first time Soviet people had the chance to see an independent Peace March in their country.

The main failure lay in the marchers’ unwillingness to make contact with the unofficial peace group. In Leningrad we had heard of the arrest of two members of the group and since no-one else seemed willing to go, I decided to meet them in Moscow, and went to their flat accompanied by Jean Stead of *The Guardian* and Cees van der Vel, a Dutch journalist.

The flat, in a high rise block on the outskirts of Moscow, was heavily guarded by KGB. We were greeted eagerly by five members of the group (mostly scientists and intellectuals).

Olga Medvedkov, doctor of Geographical Science, is the wife of Professor Yuri Medvedkov. Olga outlined the aims of the group. In their Appeal of June 4, which was sent to the Governments of the USA and USSR they suggest: the creation of private proposals to establish trust and disarmament; the creation of international independent peace groups; the establishing of international groups of scientists to research and analyse disarmament proposals; the abstention from mutual accusations, on both sides, in the press; the organising of open exchange of opinion between Soviet

people in the sphere of trust and disarmament.

She said they had received scores of proposals from Soviet people, some of which were: the creation of marriage agencies between citizens of the US and the USSR; the creation of joint cultural and medical centres; the organising of joint TV programmes; the establishing of a non governmental Soviet-American commission to research public opinion in the sphere of disarmament; and the declaration of Moscow as a nuclear-free zone. These proposals and their Appeal had been sent to the Soviet Peace Committee but remained unanswered. They had collected hundreds of signatures on a petition, mostly from students, but all their documents and papers had been confiscated by the KGB as anti-Soviet publications. This was followed by illegal house arrests, disconnection of telephones, searches were made and members constantly followed.

Here are the notes which I took of our conversation:

Two well-known members of the group, both professors are in prison now as hooligans. When I [Olga Medvedkov] went down to buy some food I was followed by 8 men down to the shop. One week after the group was created three members were under house arrest, Vladimir Fleishgakker was under house arrest for three weeks and his telephone was disconnected. Sergei Rosenoer was under house arrest for two weeks.—Under Soviet law house arrest is illegal but privately it is done. They don't tell you anything but just come outside your door and stop you from going anywhere.—When I told a solicitor about this he said he knew nothing about it.

On the 20 June Vladimir Fleishgakker went to vote at the Moscow election of members of the local Soviet. He was kept in his car by the KGB and could not vote.

On 27 June the group was going to organise a peace demonstration near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow under the slogans—'No More Hiroshima's' and 'Peace through Trust not Fear' and they were kept in their flats.

On 16 July two members of the group, Yuri Medvedkov and Yuri Hronopulo were arrested as hooligans in the street at midnight. They had left the flat at 10 o'clock and disappeared. As they didn't come back the others understood that they had been arrested. They

had wanted to join Peace March '82, in Leningrad. Olga Medvedkov phoned the main police station but they did not know where they were. She then went to the KGB but got nowhere. He had left the flat in his shirtsleeves and had no jacket with him. She wanted to make sure he had a jacket as he had just had pneumonia. She then took a car with some of the others and they found them approx. two kilometers outside Moscow in an alcoholic prison. They found out that they had been arrested on charges of hooliganism coming out of a station. Just before the arrest they had been on their way to meet other members of the group to discuss Peace March '82.

Two other members, Victor Block and Gennady Krochik were sent to Novosibirsk for the period 21-28 July. They are both physicists and were told they had to go there. No reason was given.

The group did not join the Soviet Peace Committee as it was organised by the government and is not independent. They had asked for their help but were ignored from the beginning. Peace and trust cannot only be on a political and government level. It must be discussed amongst ordinary people.—The Peace Committees are all controlled. It is not possible in the USSR for all people to come and meet Peace March '82. People don't want war but they can't discuss specific conditions of trust. The peace groups are fiction. All their work is support for the Soviet government, they don't work. At the Academy of Sciences in Moscow we have no meetings about peace. We did have a meeting to express support for the Argentine Junta during the Falkland war and to judge the UK as aggressors. There was no discussion just an official point of view.—There is a Soviet Peace Fund but what they do is not open in the press.

The group was asked how long they had been preparing their programme and they said that they had been discussing it through the winter.

They do not regard themselves as dissidents or against their government. Peace is a matter for everybody. They were surprised at the government's reaction and thought it fantastic. At first they thought they had been misunderstood. They had sent their proposals to groups in the US and to the Scandinavian Women. Nothing reaches them through the post. Through the Voice of America they had heard of support for their group at SSDII in a short mention by

Senator E. Kennedy.—They had also sent their Appeal to Geneva to the START negotiators.

Olga Medvedkov said that she had never experienced repression like this before. I asked her if they hadn't expected trouble when they started and she replied. 'It is difficult to live only the official way. The struggle for peace is so important and not against the government. It has to be dealt with despite repression.'—'We cannot raise our voices for peace quietly', she added.

They gave us the following 'Declaration to Peace March '82':

We declare, it is not enough to meet on the streets. We want to discuss conditions of trust. We would like to work with peace groups in other countries. We would like to meet the participants of Peace March '82 and want to establish trust between peoples of our country.—We expect to express your attitude to our group and repression and hope you will raise your voices.

They added that they were disappointed that the peace marchers did not come and see them but at the same time they appreciated it was difficult.

The group had collected three hundred signatures, mostly from students, on a petition but this had been confiscated together with other papers and their typewriters.

They added that their peace work had nothing to do with the fact that some of them had asked for exit visas.

They don't just want discussion but to build a monument of trust for peace in different countries, first in the USA and USSR.

They didn't know what would happen to them when the peace marchers had left. But they hadn't done anything bad.—'It's our underground. We only struggle', said Olga Medvedkov.

Following our visit some of the Scandinavian women said that they thought the Soviet attitude to the march changed completely from then on. Certainly there seemed to be more problems. In Minsk three young pacifists were prevented from joining the march although a small group later managed to communicate with them. The Soviet organisers 'suddenly' decided to make official a visit to the Khatyn war memorial outside Minsk, where 186 villages were burned to the ground by the Nazis, easily confused in many peoples minds with Katyn (outside Smolensk) where 4,000-6,000 Polish officers were killed in 1941, probably by the Russians. The march nearly split at this stage but was saved by a quiet, dignified sit-down protest by those who refused to go. We also discovered that Peace March '82, in breach of the original agreement, was being linked by the Soviets with their own march from Moscow to Vienna (via Budapest and Bratislava). *Soviet Weekly* and the Hungarian party paper *Nepszabadsag* stated clearly that the Scandinavian women's march was continuing to Vienna.

In conclusion, most participants felt that the march was a success, a definite breakthrough in East-West relations. Despite many difficulties it had been possible for two widely different groups to work together for a common cause.

Through the initiative and hard work of a small group of dedicated Scandinavian women, a major breakthrough in East-West *peoples* relations had been achieved—and this—pleasing to the Russians—was done without bringing down the walls of the Kremlin.

Sergei Batovrin	26 years, artist	followed
Victor Blok	36 physics DPH	is sent on a mission
Boris Kaluzhuy	37 physics DPH	
Genmady Krochik	33 physics DPH	is sent on a mission
Sergei Rosenoer	29 mathematician	
Oleg Rad'sinsky	26 philologist	serch; followed
Mark Reitman	50 mathematician DPH	
Igor Sobkov	33 physician	
<u>Mary</u> Fleishgakker	29 engineer	followed
<u>Vladimir</u> Fleishgakker	28 engineer	followed
Yuri Hronopulo	47 physics Professor	arest
Yuri Medvedkov	54 geographer Professor	arest
<u>Olga</u> Medvedkova	33 geographer DPH	followed
<u>Valery</u> Godyak	41 physics DPH	serch; followed
Vladimir Brodsky	38 physician	followed

N.B. This list of members of the group was written down and given to Danielle when she visited them at Mrs Medvedkov's flat. DPH is Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): for 'serch' read 'searched'.

END London Group
227 Seven Sisters Road
London N4 2DA

29/6/82

Dear Mr Brezhnev,

We have been following closely the progress of the new independent peace group in Moscow.

We were very pleased to learn of their formation and agree with their reported aims of establishing nuclear-free zones, stopping nuclear weapons testing, and working towards detente between the USA and the USSR.

As you may know, the aims of END go further than this. We are campaigning to rid Britain and the rest of Europe of nuclear weapons. By 'Europe' we mean both East and West: one of our slogans is 'no cruise, no Pershing II, no SS20s'.

We very much appreciate the publicity given to our campaign in the USSR and we hope this letter will be positively reported in the Soviet press, as have previous END initiatives. We do believe that the USSR has made several moves recently towards detente and disarmament. However, it would detract from the credibility of these moves if the Soviet government were to stifle the activities of this new peace group.

We therefore appeal to you to allow the registration of this group with the Mos-Soviet, as requested, so that they may continue their activities. We were very concerned to read that the telephones of Sergei Batovrin and others have been cut off and that Mr Oleg Radzinski has been threatened with the termination of his studies unless he withdraws his support.

This contravenes the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act and also goes against Article 50 of the Soviet constitution, adopted in 1977. . . 'citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations'. We note with consternation that the USSR is also violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which you have ratified, in particular Article 19 which states that. . .

'everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference' and Article 25. . . 'every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity. . . without unreasonable restrictions. . . to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. . .'

We share the convictions of this newly formed peace group that the questions of war, peace, and disarmament are too important to be left to governments, and that citizens should have the right to participate in the search for peace. We therefore call on you to allow their voices to be heard throughout the Soviet Union and to listen to their requests.

Yours sincerely
Carol Freeman for
London END group

[We have received copies of a number of similar letters of protest or enquiry, from individuals or organisations in the peace movement. Some of them received replies similar to the one recorded by the London END group below.]

MR ROGER MANSER
LONDON END CONVENOR
CO 227 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD
LONDON 4 ENGLAND

EYE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER STOP YOU HAVE BEEN MISLED BY FALSE REPORTS OF WESTERN MASS MEDIA STOP NOT A SINGLE PERSON REPRESENTANG PEACE MOVEMENT IN SOVIET UNION IS BEING REPPRESSED AND OF COURSE NOONE OF THEM HAS EVER BEEN ARRESTED STOP DURING ONLY TWO MONTHS IN CURRENT YEAR MAY AND JUNE SOVIET PEACE CHAMPIONS HELD ON OCCASION OF SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN NEWYORK USA OVER TWENTY THOUSAND RALLIES DEMONSTRATIONS MEETINGS MANIFESTATIONS WHICH WERE ATTENDED BY OVER SIHTY MILLION PEOPLE STOP FURTHER WHEN IN JULY MEMBERS OF 1982 PEACE MARCH FROM DANMARK NORWAY SWEDEN FINLAND AND SOVIET UNION WERE MARCHING THROUGH TERRITORY OF USSR FROM VYBORG UP TO MINSK VIA LENINGRAD KALININ MOSCOW AND SMOLENSK THEY WERE JOINED ALONG THEIR ROUTE BY OVER TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND SOVIET PEOPLE STOP OUR MOVEMENT IS FULLY INDEPENDENT AND IT DOES NOT NEED APPROVAL BY GOVERNMENT OF ANY SUCH WCTION FOR BENEFIT OF PEACE STOP AS FOR TINY GROUP OF ELEVEN PEOPLE PICTURED BY WESTERN PRESS AS INDEPENDENT PEACE MOVEMENT NOBODY OF THESE PEOPLE HAS EVER PARTICIPATED IN ABOVE LISTED ACTIONS OF PEACE ADVOCATES AND EYE AM NOT ACQUAINTED WITH ANY OF THEM STOP EYE WAS INFORMED THAT TWO OF THESE PEOPLE NAMELY YURI MEDVEDKOV AND YURI KHROPOPULO HAD BEATEN A WOMAN IN A BUS AND WERE SENTENCED BY DISTRICT PEOPLES COURT TO FIFTEEN DAYS ON CHARGE OF HOOLIGANISM STOP FURTHERMORE NOONE OF THEM HAS EVER REQUESTED REGISTRATION WITH MOSSOVIET WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY UNNECESSARY STOP THUS OUR SOVIET PEACE COMMITTEE HAD BEEN ELECTED BY ALLUNION PEACE CONFERENCE AND WE NEVER SOUGHT FOR ANY KIND OF OFFICIAL REGISTRATION STOP EYE SHALL SEND YOU BY AIRMAIL PICTURES OF SOME OF MENTIONED MASS ACTIONS OF SOVIET PEACE ADVOCATES HELD IN MAY AND JUNE THIS YEAR WHICH REFLECT BETTER THAN ANY WORDS GENUINE MASS MOVEMENT OF SOVIET PEACE CHAMPIONS STOP YOURS

YURI ZHUKOV CHAIRMANT SOVIET PEACE COMMITTEE

END PRESS RELEASE

Extract from telegram of END to Leonid Brezhnev, 19 July, 1982.

'... END is outraged by the jailing of Medvedkov and Khronopulo. Contact between all peace groups East and West is essential. Enjoin you to allow peace marchers to talk to *everyone* in peace work, release those in jail and end all harassment of independent group. . . '

(no reply as yet received).

CND PROTESTS OVER ARRESTS OF SOVIET PEACE ACTIVISTS

CND today endorsed in principle a letter of protest to Leonid Brezhnev by END (European Nuclear Disarmament) about reports that two members of an independent peace organisation in the USSR have been arrested.

We regret that these arrests coincide with the Scandinavian womens' peace march which is now crossing the USSR.

This would have been an ideal opportunity for representatives from a Western peace movement to meet with members of an independent peace movement in the USSR as well as members of the Soviet Peace Committee.

CND welcomed the formation of the new peace group and agreed with their reported aims of establishing nuclear-free zones, stopping nuclear weapons testing and working towards detente between the USA and the USSR.

With the threat of nuclear war facing us all, we believe that people everywhere have the right to put pressure on their governments to achieve nuclear disarmament.

CND's protest is in line with our previous protest to the Turkish Government over the arrest of members of the Turkish peace group.

CND will support initiatives either independent of governments, or government initiatives—both east and west—to achieve world peace through nuclear disarmament.

(CND Press Release, 20 July 1982)

**AN APPEAL ON BEHALF OF
SOVIET PEACE ACTIVISTS FROM THE
AMERICAN PEACE MOVEMENT**

To: Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary, Central Committee,
Communist Party of the Soviet Union

As activists in the American peace movement dedicated to the abolition of all nuclear weapons, we protest the actions of the Soviet government in detaining independent Soviet peace activists and seeking to prohibit their activities.

Such actions—taken even as the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament was unfolding and after hundreds of thousands rallied on June 12 for nuclear disarmament—are a violation of the Helsinki Accords guaranteeing freedom of expression to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. We welcome the recent Soviet renunciation of first-use of nuclear weapons. However, it belies the Soviet claim to be ‘peace-loving’ when independent peace activists—our brothers and sisters in the movement—are labelled ‘provocative, illegal and anti-social’.

Unity in the struggle for disarmament requires that all citizens of the world have the right to form peace movements independent of governmental or quasi-governmental control. Such independent peace committees are essential to building the broadest possible movement against nuclear arms and calling all nuclear powers to account for their arsenals.

As activists opposed to actions by the Reagan Administration that would escalate the arms race, we the undersigned call upon you to release Sergei Batovrin, now interned in a psychiatric hospital, and to cease harassment of the other independent activists and allow their voices, too, to be heard on this most vital of issues—the issue of survival in the shadow of nuclear war.

ORGANISATIONS ENDORSING THIS APPEAL

(list in formation)

Fellowship of Reconciliation
WarResisters League,
Democratic Socialists of America

SANE (National)
Metropolitan SANE
Americans for Democratic Action
West/East Peace and Democracy Project
Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy
Greenpeace, USA
Humanitas
Mobilisation for Survival
Scientists and Engineers for Political Action
Socialist Party, USA
Council for a Liveable World
Sojourners
Pax Christi

THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

For the last several weeks, Jeri Laber, over at the Helsinki Watch Committee, has been forwarding us copies of telegrams she's been receiving from disarmament groups all over the country—or, rather, copies of copies of cables *they've* been receiving from Yuri Zhukov, chairman of the official Soviet Peace Committee, in answer to their protests on behalf of the eleven Moscow citizens who formed an independent peace group early in June, only to be ruthlessly suppressed during the next few weeks. (“YOU HAVE BEEN MISLED BY FALSE REPORTS OF WESTERN MASS MEDIA STOP,” Zhukov’s form reply went. “NOT SINGLE PERSON REPRESENTING PEACE MOVEMENT IN SOVIET UNION IS BEING REPRESSED AND OF COURSE NO ONE OF THEM HAS EVER BEEN ARRESTED STOP MOSCOW IS NOT CHICAGO STOP,” and so on, for several pages, and then, “EYE HAD TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE ISSUE OF YOUR CONCERN AND FINALLY EYE WAS INFORMED THAT TWO OF THESE PEOPLE. . . WERE SENETENCED BY DISTRICT PEOPLE’S COURT ON CHARGE OF HOLLIGANISM FOR BEATING A WOMAN IN BUS STOP YOU QUALIFY THEIR BEHAVIOUR AS EXAMPLE OF INDEPENDENT STRUGGLE FOR PEACE STOP EYE WOULD CALL IT FLAGRANT BREACH OF PEACE BUT OF COURSE EYE CANNOT INSIST THAT YOUR VIEW OF WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT IS EVIL COINCIDE WITH MINE STOP”—which is about where we did stop reading his endless cable.) Anyway, all this made us all the more interested when Jeri Laber called early last week to tell us that one of the eleven independent Moscow peace activists, Mikhail Ostrovsky, along with his wife and their two small children, had recently been expelled from the Soviet Union and had just surfaced in New York City, in her office, and to ask if we would like to meet him. We would, we assured her. Among more serious reasons, we

were curious to find out what a Soviet hooligan would look like.

Ostrovsky looked young—young and earnest. Something like a Donatello sculpture: tall, lanky body; large, triangular head on a long, powerful neck. He was dressed in an orange T-shirt and crinkly new bluejeans. His hair was dark and wavy, and he had a neatly trimmed full beard. His eyes were large and seemed to keep changing their colour—brown? hazel? green? blue?—with the changing of his mood. He told us—by way of a fine translator (Ostrovsky's voice was deep and his English nonexistent)—that he was twenty-six years old and had been a dental technician, like his father before him. His mother, a doctor, was a loyal Party member, and, he explained, he had undergone a typical Soviet upbringing. Although Jewish, his family was not religious, and he had grown up without any particularly negative feelings about his lot or that of his countrymen. He had begun to be disillusioned with the Soviet system, he said, only after starting work as a dental technician in a state clinic. His eagerness to research modern (Western) technology was constantly undercut by his staid and reactionary supervisors; his enthusiasm, he was warned, was “anti-Socialist”. In 1978, after several years of such frustrations, he and his young wife decided to emigrate, filed their papers, and were refused an exit visa. The authorities explained that they had failed to procure the necessary permission from their parents—a frequent excuse in such cases. “My own parents had granted permission, and so had my wife's father, but her mother had refused,” Ostrovsky said. “We begged and begged her. I don't know—she feared the public shame, perhaps. At any rate, she refused. It wasn't a happy time. Soon she and we stopped speaking to one another, though all of us lived in the same apartment building. After a while, if we passed her in the hall, we'd turn our faces aside, and she would do the same—this despite the fact that in the meantime we'd had our two children. They remained strangers to her.”

Once a Soviet applicant is refused a visa, his life becomes progressively more difficult. The Ostrovskys had become *refuseniks*. “At my job, I found myself working three times as hard for half the pay,” Ostrovsky recalled. Increasingly

isolated from regular social intercourse, *refuseniks* often end up seeking out each other's company. In this context, Sergei Batovrin proved an important figure. Ostrovsky's eyes shone a deep blue when he spoke of his friend Batovrin. "He is actually a year younger than I am," Ostrovsky said, "but I look up to him and see him as an ideal human being." Like the Ostrovskys, Batovrin and his wife (and now their six-month-old baby) are *refuseniks*. Batovrin, the son of a high-level Soviet diplomat, grew up partly in New York City, where his father was stationed at the Soviet Mission to the United Nations. In Moscow, he was something of a hippie during the early seventies. He let his hair grow long, and became a Pop-style painter. His work never received official sanction, and a few years ago he organized a show, in his small apartment, of his own and other disapproved art—an enterprise that did little to endear him to the authorities.

"Batovrin is tremendously generous," Ostrovsky explained. "Tremendously outgoing. He knows everyone, and everyone is drawn to his home by the quality of the friendship and the conversation. He knows physicists and mathematicians, artists, other former hippies, psychiatrists, other *refuseniks*. We would all gather at his home at all hours to talk about our own situation, our country's, the world's. During the last several months, we spoke increasingly of the perils of war, and this is how a group of us decided to form our committee. The Soviet people truly want peace. This is perhaps the fundamental fact of Soviet existence—the memory of the war and the twenty million dead, and the longing for peace. You can be standing in line and people will be complaining about this or that, but then someone will say, 'Still, the most important thing is that we never have another war,' and everyone will agree. It has achieved the level of a folk saying. People say it, but they don't *do* anything. And here's a contradiction, because the other lesson from the war was the horror of being invaded, so that people support a big defense program. And they don't see the contradiction. The entire Soviet system is built on contradictions of this kind, and is designed to prevent people from thinking about them. People live with their eyes closed, and we were hoping to start the process of opening them."

We asked Ostrovsky to what extent the military budget—and, specifically, its nuclear component—was public knowledge.

“Well, very little of it, of course,” he replied. “But that’s why people have brains in their head, isn’t it—to read between the lines?”

The Group to Establish Trust Between the USSR and the USA announced itself to the world on June 4, 1982, from Batovrin’s apartment. According to Ostrovsky, the eleven members (about half of them were *refuseniks*) felt that a precondition of disarmament is trust and understanding between peoples, and their initial proposals therefore included such things as cultural and medical exchanges, regular cooperation on space missions, and the establishment of pen-pal networks. In addition, they proposed “open discussion between representatives of the two governments, to be broadcast over television and shown in full, with the opportunity for people to phone in questions to the speakers” and “a joint program for peace education, compulsory in Soviet and American schools and textbooks.” They also proposed the formation of a four-sided committee, with representatives of the governments *and the peoples* of the two countries. “And another proposal,” Ostrovsky recalled, smiling, his eyes hazel, “was an exchange of children—especially the children of leaders. Perhaps leaders would think twice before starting a war if their children were in each other’s capitals.” In all, the group issued thirty proposals. The dissemination of these proposals became especially difficult after June 12th, which was the day of the huge anti-nuclear demonstration in Central Park and was also the day when the Soviet authorities began cracking down on the group. During the next several weeks, most of its work was semi-underground. The members had to steer clear of the police. They launched a peace petition and gathered signatures from at least five hundred courageous souls—this despite the fact that copies were continually being seized by the police. One by one, the members were nabbed, hauled in, warned, sometimes released, sometimes not.

And then, in early July, Ostrovsky and his wife received word that their visa had been granted, even though her

mother still refused to approve their emigration. "This presented us with a dilemma," Ostrovsky said. "We had decided, in joining the group, to give up our attempt to emigrate. Instead, we would stay and fight for peace. Now we—and we alone among them all—were being granted our visa. I don't know why we were singled out. It was a kind of psychological warfare, perhaps—to force a wedge between us and the others. I did not want to leave my friends, and at first I wasn't going to. They encouraged me, however. They insisted that I would be of more service outside, spreading our story and our proposals. So we decided to go, but it was all in a tremendous hurry." The Ostrovskys travelled first to Italy, and in mid-August they arrived in New York City.

We asked Ostrovsky about Zhukov and the official Soviet Peace Committee.

"Well, you have to understand that official peace demonstrations in the Soviet Union are not at all like those here or in Western Europe," he replied. "They are never spontaneous. One isn't allowed to take part unless one is invited, and if one is invited one isn't allowed not to take part. And, of course, they're never critical of the official Soviet line."

We asked him what he and his friends had thought of the June 12th rally here in New York City.

"We didn't hear about it at the time," he replied. "I heard about it only after I got out. Occasionally, the Soviet press will mention the peace marches in the West, but they show only brief images on TV. The reason is simple: I remember one day looking at such a TV image and being amazed at the obviously handmade quality of the signs the demonstrators were carrying. Signs are *never* handmade in Soviet peace marches. The Soviet media don't want to give Soviet citizens any ideas."

We asked about the situation of his friends.

"I am concerned about all of them," he said. "All of them are being harassed. But I am especially concerned for Sergei Batovrin. On August 5th, Sergei staged another apartment show, this time of eighty-eight anti-war paintings. The next day, he was arrested and placed, against his will, in a psychiatric hospital. No doubt they are doing with him what they have done with others—forcibly drugging him

alternately with stimulants and with tranquilizers. This procedure has bad physical side effects, but they aren't so much interested in causing one pain. They simply want to destroy one's personality. After several months of this kind of thing, one emerges lifeless, without anything of one's former vitality and former nature. It's a terrible situation. He's a great and vital man."

Ostrovsky was silent for a moment, his eyes almost brown. He sighed. "The peril of war is extremely real today, and we must find some way out of the disaster," he said. "But this will come only if citizens in the Soviet Union can demonstrate and put pressure on their leaders, just as yours do here. We did not, when we got started, see ourselves as a dissident movement or a human-rights movement. But these two issues are inseparable in the Soviet Union today. If there are human rights, people can and will struggle for peace. If not, not. That is why the American peace movement must support people like Batovrin."

New Yorker, 13 September 1982.

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The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.)

Guardian, 10 September 1982

'Peacenik' free

THE Soviet peace campaigner, Sergei Batovrin has been released from a Moscow psychiatric hospital after being held there for more than a month, friends reported yesterday. Mr Batovrin was a leading member of an unofficial peace group set up to try to develop trust between the Soviet Union and the US. — Reuter.

Soviet Hospital Said to Force Drugs on Peace Group Leader

MOSCOW, Aug. 8 (AP) — A co-founder of Moscow's only independent disarmament group is being administered depressant drugs against his will in the psychiatric hospital where he is being held, his wife said today.

Natasha Batovrin said during a telephone interview that her husband, Sergei, was being given pills four times a day and had been threatened with electric shock treatments if he did not take the medication. She said she had spent four hours with him today in Hospital No. 14 and that he seemed very tired and subdued after swallowing the tablets.

Mr. Batovrin, a 25-year-old artist, was arrested Friday at the home of another member of the independent peace group.

8/9/82

New York Times, Moscow 8 August 1982

25 August 1982

STATEMENT BY MIKHAIL OSTROVSKY IN NEW YORK

My friends and I first began talking about forming a peace group about eight months ago. We were concerned about the impasse in efforts to bring about disarmament, and saw that governments are too greatly burdened with their own interests and political considerations to resolve disarmament conflicts. We felt that there was a need for the Soviet public to become involved, and our first priority was to inform people about these issues. We also believed that increased contact with Western citizens and exchange of information with them would contribute greatly to the cause of peace, and that in particular, mutual trust between the citizens of the US and the USSR would be the best basis for disarmament.

We timed the announcement of our group's formation to coincide with the June opening of the UN Special Session on Disarmament. At first we did not anticipate that we would be harassed, but our group acted freely for only a week before members began to be detained by the police. and that is my chief concern now—the safety of my colleagues. Members of the group, which include 15 scientists, engineers and other professionals have been repeatedly held by the police, interrogated, and threatened with dismissal from their jobs or expulsion from their academic institutions because of their work for peace.

I am most concerned for Sergei Batovrin, the leader of the group, who was interned in a psychiatric hospital on August 6 and is being threatened with electric shock therapy unless he continues to take depressant drugs. He is also threatened with permission to emigrate, but he turned it down, saying he wanted to stay in Moscow and keep working with the peace group.

I think the Soviet authorities have made a serious mistake in preventing our group from operating freely. By suppressing our group, the Soviet Union undermines its image as peacemaker, and is in danger of losing its credibility with the American peace movement.

I call on organisations in the American peace movement to press for the release of Sergei Batovrin, and appeal to Soviet authorities to cease harassing our peace group.

These documents have been presented as information to the British and European peace movements, and to assist them in their discussions.

It is too early for us to draw conclusions. We are glad to conclude our documents with the news of the release of Sergei Batovrin from psychiatric hospital, perhaps in response to representations to the Soviet authorities from European and American peace organisations. We hope that the group may now be free to continue with constructive work.

Here are some questions which this episode raises:

Do you think that Western peace movements should engage in discussions only with 'official', state-supported Peace Committees or Councils in the Warsaw Pact countries? Or only with 'independent', unofficial groups, even when these are small, and isolated as 'dissidents'? Or with anyone who wants to talk?

On this question, END has favoured the last course: talk with anyone, provided it is on honest terms and that difficult issues (like Afghanistan, Poland and the SS20s) are not swept under the carpet. In the case of the Soviet Union, we do not suppose that the members of this small Moscow group are the only Soviet citizens who care about peace. Very important exchanges have taken place recently between physicians and churches, various forms of 'twinning' are going on, and we have favoured contact—as direct and unbureaucratic as possible.

In relation to the official Soviet Peace Committee, END has had more reservations. We are directly opposed to the manipulation of the European peace movement by Soviet-controlled agencies, such as the World Peace Council. But several British peace delegations have visited the USSR in the past two years, as guests of the Soviet Peace Committee, sponsored by Quaker Peace Service, the Northern Friends Peace Board, and (recently) by CND. Their reports have suggested that at least some officials of the Soviet Peace Committee are taking a more flexible attitude, and are willing to listen to criticisms of Soviet military policies.

It is possible that behind-the-scenes debates are going on in the official committees, and that these may be influenced

by *Western visitors.*

But *how* are we to influence them? Should Western peace movements now boycott further discussion with the Soviet Peace Committee until the right of unofficial groups (like the Moscow one) to engage independent activity is guaranteed? Or would this be to play the Cold War game?

This episode certainly played into the hands of the Cold Warriors—and responsibility for this lies squarely on the shoulders of the Soviet authorities who reacted with such paranoia. The event could have been damaging if the American and British peace movements had not at once come to the support of the Moscow group and thereby demonstrated their non-aligned stance. But it should not pass without notice that much of the Western media (with honourable exceptions) showed no interest at all in the programme and proposals of the new group: indeed, these often went unreported. Some newspapers—and also President Reagan—simply made use of the episode as Cold War propaganda—as an example of Soviet ‘hypocrisy’ and intolerance.

Were END and CND right to protest? Or was this an intervention into Soviet affairs? Should the Scandinavian Peacemarchers have acted differently?

The Scandinavian Women were in a difficult position. The march from Helsinki to Minsk (when the true march ended) had been negotiated with difficulty with the Soviet authorities, and they had entered into mutual agreements to respect each others’ wishes.

But END is grateful to Danielle Grünberg—our ‘own’ marcher sponsored by the British peace movement—for visiting the Moscow group and for bringing back the first of their badges to reach the West.

END has from its origin taken up a principled stand on exactly this issue. In the words of our initial Appeal, of April 1980:

. . . we must defend and extend the right of all citizens, East or

West, to take part in this common movement and to engage in every kind of exchange.

We appeal to our friends in Europe, of every faith and persuasion, to consider urgently the ways in which we can work together for these common objectives. We envisage a European-wide campaign, in which every kind of exchange takes place; in which representatives of different nations and opinions confer and co-ordinate their activities; and in which less formal exchanges, between universities, churches, women's organisations, trade unions, youth organisations, professional groups and individuals, take place with the object of promoting a common object: to free all of Europe from nuclear weapons.

We must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other, and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.

In our view, this principle is critical to the future success of the peace movement. If we are to break down the Cold War, we must insist on open communications East/West, and on full and free exchange.

The peace movements of the world must support each other and we must come to the aid of our own fellow-workers for peace. The worst example of the repression of peace workers at this moment is not in the Warsaw bloc but within NATO (see our pamphlet on the current trial in Ankara of members of the Turkish Peace Association).

As for the new Moscow group, we cannot know how the episode will conclude. It is too early to guess whether this is the first signal of a new kind of independent grass-roots movement in the Soviet Union: or whether this group will be isolated, its members encouraged or forced to emigrate, so that little more will be heard of their courageous stand. If further news of harassment should become known, here are some addresses to which you can write.

Addresses of members of the group: please note that mail may not get through—

*Sergei Batovrin, spokesman
ulitsa Krupskoi No. 5, kv. 96
Moscow 117331, USSR*

*Yury Medvedkov
Leninsky prospekt No. 123, kv 318
proyezd 5
Moscow, USSR*

*Maria Fleishgacker
ulitsa Novoryazanskaya 36-28
Moscow, USSR*

If there should be further harassment of the group, send enquiries or protests to—

*Soviet Ambassador
18 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8*

*Leonid I. Brezhnev, Chairman
Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
The Kremlin
Moscow, USSR*

*N.A. Shchelokov
Minister of Internal Affairs
ul. Ogarieva 6
Moscow 103009, USSR*

*Yury A. Zhukov, Chairman
Soviet Peace Committee
36 Prospekt Mira
Moscow, USSR*

*Moscow City Procurator:
SSSR
113184 Moskva
ul. Novokuznetskaya 27
Moskovskaya Gorodskaya
Prokuratura
Prokuroru*

*Chairman of the Moscow City
Soviet of Workers' Deputies:
SSSR
g. Moskva
ul. Gorkogo 13
Moskovskoy Gorodskoy Sovet
Deputatov Trudyashchikhsya
Predsedatelyu*

Latest News

While this Special Report was in the press, we have received more news of the Moscow Peace Group.

We have learned from Dr Yuri Medvedkov that the work of the group is continuing, despite harassment. An exhibition of Sergei Batovrin's anti-war paintings was prepared for Hiroshima Day (August 6th), but on August 5th 88 of these paintings were confiscated. By the end of August the group had experienced 90 man-days of house arrest, and 30 man-days of jail. Several members had been subjected to 24-hour surveillance and continual harassment. Dr Medvedkov asks for worldwide support for the group, and especially asks for the support of fellow scientists. The group felt that the Scandinavian Peacemarch was a disappointment. Dr Medvedkov adds that he and his wife, Olga, have entered a new and important phase of their lives. The work of the group has become more important to them than their previous applications to emigrate.

We have also learned from a supporter of the British peace movement who has had discussions with members of the group that they have just issued new proposals for establishing trust between Soviet and United States citizens. This call is also addressed to members of the European peace movement. These new proposals include—

- * The setting up of libraries and cultural centres in all towns of over one million people in the Soviet Union and the USA.
- * The use of films and audio-visual equipment to learn each others' languages.
- * The free exchange of newspapers.
- * The easy availability of tourist visas.
- * Extending telephone communications.
- * Guarantees that no embargo be placed on trade relating to agricultural products, medicines, and primary resources.

Although Soviet authorities claim that the group is tiny and mainly Moscow-based, a spokesperson from the group says that by early October they had collected the signatures

of 900 supporters from different parts of the Soviet Union. As the process of gathering signatures is not an easy one, it may be assumed that many more have not reached Moscow. There are also further details of the harassment to which members of the group have been subjected. The charges of 'hooliganism' against Dr Medvedkov and Dr Yury Khronopulo (a distinguished physicist) arose in this way. The two men were on the way to a station when they found that they were being followed by a woman and a group of loud youths. As they waited for the train, the woman came up to Dr Khronopulo, pushed him, and began shouting at him to take his hands off her. Khronopulo turned to people on the platform to witness that he was not molesting her. At length the two men went to the police-station to complain of the harassment. The police officer offered to drive them home in a police car. But officers from the KGB then brought them back and compelled the police to charge them with hooliganism.

The two were sent to a special prison for 15-day offenders. They slept on boards, without pillows or blankets. They were fed three times a day with different types of gruel. Only once were they allowed to stretch their legs in the prison-yard. Their wives were given no information and found them only after four days of searching.

Another member of the group, Viktor Blok, narrowly escaped being run down by a truck while cycling home with his son. Yuri Medvedkov was driving a car, which was in good condition, when a wheel flew off. Although Sergei Batovrin was released from the psychiatric institution early in September, he is still being treated as an 'outpatient'. His treatment was illegal, since he was confined on the orders of the Military Commissariat, which has no power over him since he had been exempted from the draft. He was compelled to take 21 pills a day of the strong drug, chlorproteksin. He was also given an electroencephalogram while under drugs, and threatened, if he misbehaved, with the stronger drug, sulphazin.

The Soviet peace group denies that they are 'dissidents'. The members say that they are reinforcing the official policy of peace and disarmament which is given almost daily coverage

in the newspapers. Their offence is that they are an independent group, seeking direct communication with Western peace movements. (They have sought, but have been denied, official status and recognition.)

The group wishes to emphasise its unity with the peace movements of the world, and it welcomes correspondence and visits from Western peace activists. Here are two addresses:

Yury Khronopulo
Likhocheveskoe shosse,
dom 20, k.3, Kv 77,
141700 Moskovskaya oblast,
g. Dolgoprudnyy,
USSR.

Viktor Blok
Likhocheveskoe schosse,
dom. 20, k.1, kv. 159,
141700 Moskovskaya oblast,
g. Dolgoprudnyy,
USSR.

STOP PRESS

According to a Reuter newflash (*Guardian*, 29 October) another member of the group, Oleg Radzinsky, has been arrested. He is charged under article 70 of the criminal code, covering 'anti-Soviet propaganda'. The maximum sentence under this article is seven years imprisonment plus five years of exile. Mr Radzinsky, aged 26, is described in our information as a 'philologist' and as a 'teacher': we believe he is also a writer. He is the son of a well-known playwright.

As we go to press we have no more information on this case. We suggest that readers address their enquiries to the Soviet authorities.

We have just learned that new branches of the Peace Group have been formed in Odessa, Movosibirsk and Leningrad. There is also an 'Independent Initiative' of young people, already several hundreds strong. Here is the text of the latest Appeal—

ADDRESS TO PEACE SUPPORTERS

Today, when 25 million people are wearing military uniforms, and when stocks of nuclear arms can turn the world into radioactive ruins, no one can hope that the world will survive by itself, or through someone else's efforts. Nuclear arms have made every living being into a hostage of the relations between the East and West. The two opposing camps have a lot of suspicions and incomprehension towards each other and it leads to a very ominous character of the interdependence of the two sides.

Everyone shares responsibility. Neither geographical borders, nor political contradictions can be a handicap in realising this responsibility.

On the first of January 1983 at 15:00 GMT we propose holding TEN MINUTES of silence, prayer and universal reflections on peace, disarmament and removal of mistrust among nations.

We call for:

- everyone to break routine daily activities for ten minutes, to devote these minutes to reflection on peace
- all the sides in all military clashes and conflicts to stop their military actions by announcing de-facto cease-fire for at least ten minutes
- everyone who is taking part in violence to give up at least ten minutes.

Ten minutes is little. But ten minutes of universal reflection on peace is ten minutes of solid peace which can turn into a destructive handful of sand thrown into the machinery of war.

We appeal for ten minutes of stable peace.

Moscow, USSR
October 16, 1982

The Group to Establish Trust
Between the USA and the USSR

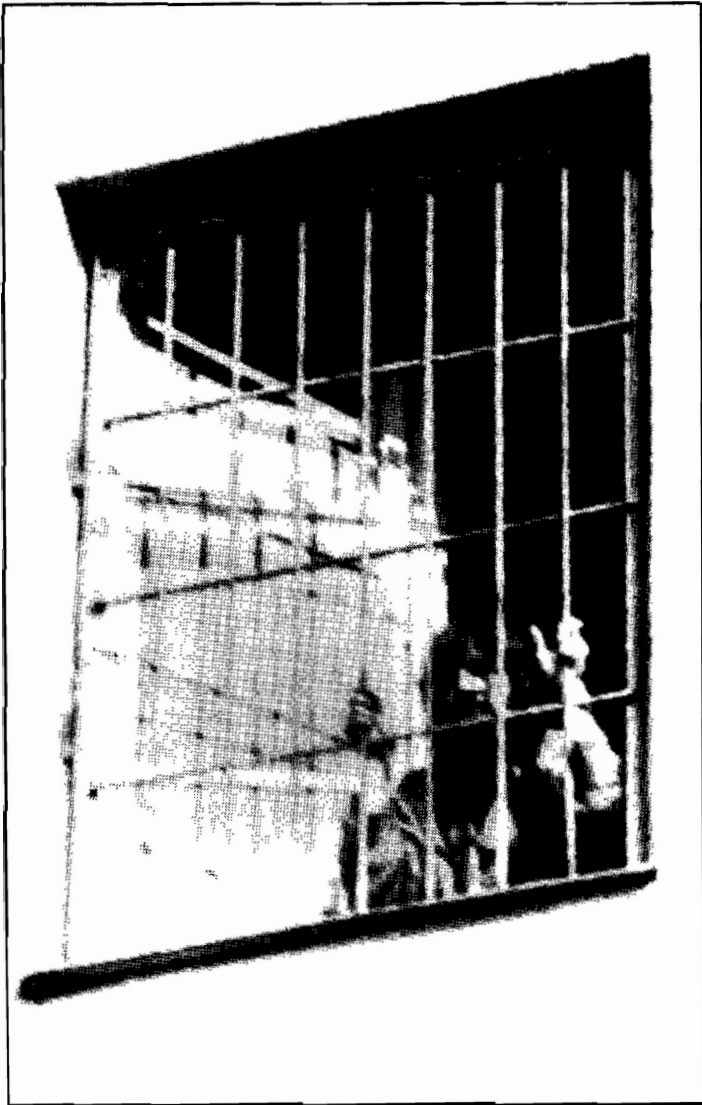
Signed: Sergei Batovrin, Maria Fleishgakker, Vladimir Fleishgakker, Igor Sobkov, Gennady Krochik, Viktor Blok, Yury Khronopulo, Sergei Rosenoer, Boris Kalyuzhny, Yury Medvedkov, Olga Medvedkova, Valery Godyak, Vladimir Brodsky, Oleg Radzinsky, Mark Reitman

Biographical Notes

Jean Stead was born in Yorkshire and started life as a reporter on the *Yorkshire Post*. From there she joined the news team of *The Guardian*, where she has now been working for nearly 20 years. In 1969 she became the first woman News Editor on Fleet Street. After nine years she was appointed Assistant Editor responsible for News and Special Features and it was then that she became particularly interested in writing about the renaissance of the peace movement.

Danielle Rose Grünberg was born 1940 in the UK, of an Austrian father and Danish mother and was educated in France/Scandinavia. She worked in television in Copenhagen before studying to become a theatre director. She has worked for six years with the Emerging Dragon theatre group in Somerset and has for the past year been national coordinator of the Women's Peace Alliance in the UK.

Women's Peace Alliance
Box 240,
8, Elm Avenue,
Nottingham.



Sergie Batovrin in Moscow Psych. Hospital No 14, August 1982.

Photo by courtesy Aid to Russian Christians—Peter Reddaway.

Joint END/Merlin pamphlets

The new Hungarian peace movement

One of the main movers of the new autonomous Hungarian peace movement, Ferenc Kőszegi, outlines the fascinating growth of cells of peace activists in schools and universities. With an introduction by E.P. Thompson, this exciting publication describes in detail the ideas behind this important phenomenon and its struggle to avoid co-optation by the state, official peace council and dissidents, and remain a mass movement. Also included is E.P. Thompson's lecture given in Budapest on 'The normalisation of Europe'.

ISBN 0850362946 price: 90p

Moscow independent peace group

Since the news hit the western press that a peace group independent of the official peace committee had been formed, END has received many inquiries for more information on that group. We now have first hand accounts from Jean Stead (Assistant Editor of *The Guardian*) and END supporter Danielle Grünberg who were on the Scandinavian women's march and visited the group while passing through Moscow. The pamphlet also presents additional documents and invites debate from the peace movement.

ISBN 0850362954 price: 75p

Comiso

As part of the militarisation of NATO's southern flank, the small Sicilian town of Comiso is threatened with a cruise missile base in December '83. But over half the adult population of Sicily have pledged themselves against it and the island is now the focus for the European peace movement. Ben Thompson examines the background of Italian politics and gives a first-hand account of the Sicilian struggle.

ISBN 0850362962 price: 60p

Turkey

Jailing the leaders of Turkey's peace movement is just part of the military regime's campaign to suppress all opposition. Representatives of END have been to Turkey to monitor the drawn-out trial of the peace association, who are receiving support from peace groups all over Europe. In this pamphlet Mehmet Ali Dikerdem and John Mephram look at the history and work of the Turkish Peace Association and analyse why a state based terror wins Western approval.

ISBN 0850362970

