

40 years since END
European Nuclear Disarmament
"Detente from below"

**AN INTERVIEW
WITH
TAIR TAIROV**

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FOLKE SUNDMAN

FOREWORD TO THE INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR
TAIR TAIROV

THE EUROPEAN PEACE MOVEMENT AND THE BREAKDOWN OF THE COLD WAR

On April 28th, 1980, an appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament was launched at a press conference which took place in the House of Commons in the UK. The main authors were E.P. Thompson, Mary Kaldor, Dan Smith and Ken Coates, but the text was the outcome of broad consultations and discussions mainly within the British peace movements.

The END was an early response to the new nuclear arms race that accelerated from the late 1970s onwards and had a special focus on Europe. That nuclear threat re-activated many old peace movements and organizations, but it also formed the basis for new movements and action groups all over Europe and other parts of the world. The new wave of peace activities was quite heterogeneous politically and organizationally, the common denominator being a clear stance against the deployment of new medium-range missiles in Europe.

The home base of END was the UK and the British peace movement, but it rapidly gained ground all over Europe. END was both a political concept and an organization.

Organizationally the most visible part of the initiative were the big END Conventions that were organized in a range of European countries, starting in Brussels in 1982 and finishing in Moscow in 1991. (A final "wind-up" Convention took place in Brussels 1992.)

The END Appeal was the expression of the new political concept that END represented. The concept had two intertwined dimensions.

First, it was directed against the entire nuclear arms race, against the deployment of all medium-range missiles in Europe, from Poland to Portugal, as the Appeal outlined. The END Appeal adhered to the post-war tradition of the international peace movement being independent or non-aligned: "we do not

wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of the East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.”

Second, at the same time as END demanded an immediate halt to the production and deployment of medium-range missiles and supported the ratification of the SALT II agreement, it explicitly extended its perspective above and beyond the Cold War bloc divide: “we must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn not be loyal to the ‘East’ or to the ‘West’ but to each other. and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.”

In the early 1980s the Appeal and the campaigning around it caused tensions also within the peace movement. The Soviet-influenced movements organized under the umbrella of the World Peace Council, initially took a very critical and sometimes aggressive stance towards END. In the most extreme statements it was labelled an agent of Western interests. Throughout the decade the constellation changed, to a great extent as a result of the internal changes in the Eastern bloc and the emerging detente between East and West. Gradually many of the official peace committees of Eastern Europe joined END. If you can’t beat them, join them, was one ironic explanation for these developments.

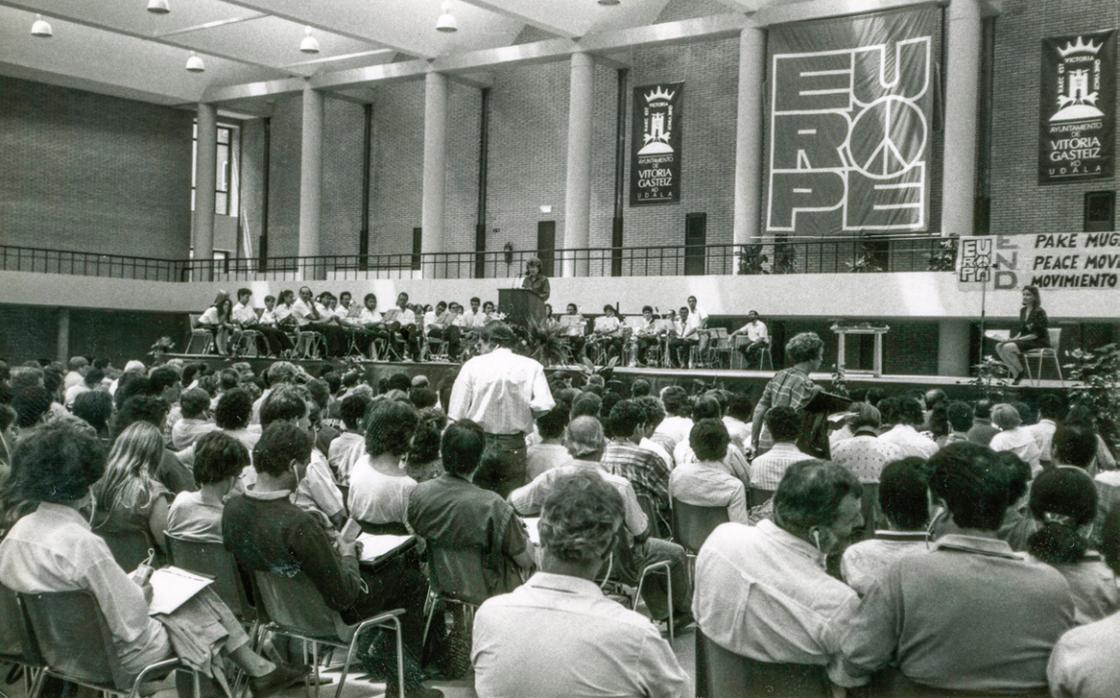
The Finnish peace movement exemplifies this development quite concretely. The traditional independent peace organizations, the Peace Union (now



E.P. Thompson

celebrating its 100th Anniversary of its re-establishment in 1920) and the Committee of 100 (established in 1963 following the concept of Bertrand Russell’s campaigning) supported and joined the END from the very beginning. The Finnish Peace Committee, then an influential WPC member, was originally extremely critical towards END, but gradually revised its views on the project. Ten years later the three Finnish peace organizations were ready to host the END Convention in Helsinki and Tallinn in 1990, together with both old and new actors from Estonia. It is important to note that Estonia was then still a part of the Soviet Union.

In retrospect, the impact of END should be neither over- nor underestimated. END and its



Openings session of END convention Vitoria-Gasteiz.

network was a significant part of the public opinion that gave direction to the process resulting in the signing of the INF Treaty in 1987 and later the SALT II agreement. END also gave a lot of moral strength to the various initiatives characterized as 'detente from below', which again was an integral part of the process behind the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the rest of the Eastern bloc.

As this interview shows, Tair Tairov was an active participant in these events and processes. Tair somehow personifies certain key aspects of the whole END process. He came from the old establishment of the Soviet Union. At a fairly early stage he ran into great difficulties in fulfilling the role given to him within the World Peace Council, started to build contacts and networks across the old bloc divides, reached a point where his "double role" was no longer acceptable to his employers, went back home and continued to promote new thinking within the Soviet Union, both through his diverse contacts with the political elite and the new actors in the civil society in the making. And thus, he was one brick in the complex process resulting in the new arms control agreements and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

His story as covered in this interview is of course his subjective version of events, nothing more and nothing less.

Forty years after the launch of the END appeal, this part of the history of the peace movement is important to recall also in light of the extremely worrying trends in today's world. The INF Treaty has been annulled and the SALT agreement is also close to being disrupted. Superpower relations, now with China as an emerging player, are severely strained and the danger of a new nuclear arms build-up is imminent. The END Appeal was of course a child of its time, but many of its key thoughts are still surprisingly relevant. We need new initiatives for European nuclear and worldwide disarmament. We need new initiatives to bridge the various bloc divides and to ease the tensions that are gaining strength. The movements are yearning for new E.P. Thompsons and Tair Tairovs to act as catalysts for the changes that are so badly needed.

FOLKE SUNDMAN

representative of the Committee of 100 and the Peace Union at the
END Liaison Committee 1982-1991



TAÏR TAIROV

- **Born 1937** in Tashkent
- **Doctor of** International Law
- **Professor of** History of International Relations
- **Representative of** the Soviet Peace Committee in the World Peace Council
- **Director of** the Information Centre of the WPC in Helsinki
- **Institute of** World Economy and International Relation in Moscow
- **Member of** the END (European Nuclear Disarmament) Liaison Committee
- **Vice President** of the IPB (International Peace Bureau)
- **Founder of** the Foundation for Social Innovations and Civic Peace Coalition

How did you end up at the office of the World Peace Council in Helsinki?

After graduating from MGIMO – the University of International Relations and International Law – in 1962 I went to work in the office of the Student Council of the USSR, which was a part of the Committee of Youth Organisations. This allowed me to meet many students and youth activists from European countries and to work as an interpreter with Russian officials. Later I left the youth movement and joined academic centres starting so-called peace research, visiting some European institutions and academic communities and some personalities, including Johan Galtung, one of the champions of the time.

In the early 1970s Nikolai Voshinin, who had served as Chairperson of the Committee of Youth Organisations and was nominated as the Soviet Representative to the World Peace Council in Vienna, called me unexpectedly. He said: “Tair, you know the peace movements, and you are familiar with peace



Tair's home in Moscow 9–10 November 2018 the interview was conducted by Tair's long-time friends – Finnish peace activists Folke Sundman, Kalevi Suomela and Ilkka Taipale, photo taken by Kalle Sysikaski.

research. Come to Vienna to work with us. You'll be the head of the information department and inform Moscow about what is going on in the WPC and travel around the globe." I said "Nikolai, I cannot go, because I am preparing my doctorate. Thank you very much for the offer and for your confidence in me."

I defended my doctorate, I became a professor, I had a good salary, and so on. In 1979 I suddenly got a phone call from the Central Committee of the Communist Party. They asked me to drop by.

"You know," they told me, "the situation in Europe is terrible. Nobody knows what is going on except Genscher (Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany)." What happened?" I asked. "You know, Genscher adopted the double-track decision of NATO to deploy missiles, among them Tomahawks, which fly at a very low altitude with nuclear weapons, and we have to do something. You have to raise public opinion in Europe against this." I said, I cannot do this. They said "No, no, no, please we ask you. Go to Helsinki. The World Peace Council's headquarters are in Helsinki now. The chairperson of the information centre died in a car accident somewhere. Sasha Lebedev is main representative there. You'll be second to him".

I was a professor and lecturer at the time, and also a consultant to the Soviet Peace Committee. I was travelling quite frequently, attending different seminars. That is another story. I had long been going to seminars and conferences on peace and disarmament around Europe. Once upon a time I accompanied Gunnar Myrdal during his short visit to Moscow to present his book on Asian Drama.

I said "No. I cannot go to Finland" "Why? You're stupid! Look at Helsinki!" I said "I have a chair. I am a professor. I get 600 roubles, a month, which is enough for me and family. I will not go."

It was in March of 1979 when our journalist [head of the WPC Information Centre] died in a car accident, so Moscow was looking for someone to replace him. It was rather strange that finding a candidate was so complicated. It was considered a privileged appointment and an important post abroad.

In August I got another call. They asked if I could come to the Central Committee. I agreed to go. They said "Tair, you are the only one in Moscow and maybe in the whole Soviet Union who refuses to go. It was the third time, and I agreed to go. Later I wrote an article in which I referred to this case as "When A Destiny Knocked on the Door". So, this is how I was appointed Director of

the Information Centre of the WPC.

The day that I left Moscow I was informed that I would also be the deputy of the Soviet representative. The day I got on the train in Moscow I learned that the main Soviet representative, Sasha Lebedev, had been fired. So I was left alone and had to serve as both the head of the information centre and a secretary of the WPC in Helsinki.

When I arrived at the railway station in Helsinki, a Lada was waiting for me at the platform. I said “What are you doing? There should be a place to park a car.” They said “Don’t worry! Brezhnev agreed with Kekkonen, we can park any time any place, no problem....”

According to my information Sasha Lebedev was fired the day I left Moscow, sometime in September 1979. I found out that a Polish representative in the World Peace Council who used to play in a casino in Geneva went through quite a lot of money, and he had borrowed from a Russian account. He was very honest and came to the Russian authorities and said “I’m sorry, I lost some games, it was my fault. After that the intelligence services came to me and tried to recruit me but I refused.” As a result, the Polish secretary was fired immediately. On that pretext Sasha Lebedev was kicked out as well. He was a very good friend of mine and died recently in Moscow.

How did You establish yourself at the WPC and what was your approach to the tasks ahead?

As I mentioned, I came to be in two positions – as Director of the Information Centre and as the Soviet Representative.

The first day that I came to Lönnrotinkatu (then the street address of the WPC) there was no one there. I went on to the Information Centre and saw Bhagat Vats, an Indian, printing a brochure called “Save Solomon Mahlangu”, a South African. I said “Look Bhagat – it was September 1979 – Solomon Mahlangu was hanged in April. He’s dead already. You are publishing a brochure in all the different languages to save him. How could this happen?!” He said: “This is the decision of Romesh Chandra.” Then I knew what the World Peace Council was, and who Romesh Chandra was.

I was thinking what I should do and how I should start my activities. I decided first to write an appeal to all members of the WPC informing them about the arms race in Europe and the deployment of dangerous new missiles that

could trigger a nuclear conflict between the two superpowers. It was not my personal letter but a kind of WPC appeal. After a while I asked members of the staff to mail the letter to all available peace and disarmament movements and different NGOs in Europe and around the world. I immediately sent this letter to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and to some well-known antinuclear campaigns in The Netherlands and Belgium, and to a few other noteworthy NGOs. The message was simple. If we want to live and survive, we have to protest. And people started to realise the danger of the moment. A little later I asked Nino Pasti, a former NATO General from Italy, to publish a brochure with his statement about the dangers of a new arms race in Europe.

In 1980 I went to New York and read in the New York Times about a meeting taking place at the Riverside Church about Russian missiles, or something like that. I went there and found E.P. Thompson lecturing. This happened shortly before the launch of the END Appeal, in April 1980. I entered the discussions and people started to ask me questions. E.P. Thompson writes about it in one of his books.

Then there was a meeting in Stockholm on nuclear issues as well, where I was on the panel. It was an international conference in the autumn of 1981 devoted to the centenary of SPAS (the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society) – the oldest Swedish and one of the oldest European NGOs.

Do you remember (pointing at Ilkka Taipale who also was present at the event) when they asked me what I think about human rights violations? I agreed that unfortunately we have violations. And people cheered.

E.P. Thompson was there, and Mient Jan Faber from the Dutch IKV was there as well. They said “Tair, you are like us. Be careful. We need you. Don’t provoke them or they may kick you out.”

In fact, there was no immediate reaction from Moscow to my statement in Stockholm, although I was afraid I would be criticized by the Soviet Peace Committee. There were Swedish communists at that meeting in Stockholm, but they were probably not telling the Russian Embassy anything. And I was thinking myself, if the Russians, if the Peace Committee would say “Tair, why did you say we have violations of human rights, I’d say of course we have – my friend couldn’t find a job for a long time, his right to work was violated. I myself was without a job for six months.” There were many arguments like that, but of course they were not political arguments.

So that was a first opening towards the Western peace movements. I had good contacts, invitations, meetings, and so on. I made many initiatives, like

Generals for Peace, but the main thing was how to make Europeans aware of what was really happening. I started to travel to Sweden, Denmark, and of course Norway. In Norway I met Eva Nordland and Women for Peace. I visited Norway almost once a week, sometimes without a visa, getting one at the airport! Sometimes there was no flight or only a landing at a military airport in Oslo. And I'd get a visa at the airport because the women were very well-connected. She [Eva Nordland] was close to Stoltenberg and Brundtland – she was a friend of theirs.

Some of my contacts with Eastern European dissidents that were in contact with the new peace movement in the 1980s actually preceded my career at the WPC.

Working in the field of cooperation with national student unions in Europe through IUS, the International Union of Students, which had an office in Prague, I met with Jiří Pelikán who was the president of IUS 1953–63, and also one of the authors of the Prague Spring appeal.

After three years with the student movement I went to the Institute of State and Law, where I wrote my first dissertation. It was in 1967. Zdenek Mlynar from Czechoslovakia came in December 1967 to train at the Institute. He introduced himself, saying that he represented the head of the legal commission of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. He spoke about introducing socialism with a human face. I said “Zdenek, the Russians would never allow you to be the first. Only Russians can be the first. He said “Tair, don't worry. Sasha [Alexander Dubcek] spoke to Brezhnev. And Brezhnev said to him ‘Go ahead!’”. I said “No, Zdenek, it wouldn't work.” The following year, well...

The year after he left the Student Movement Pelikán he became the minister of information in the Dubcek government. He used to come to Moscow and said once, “Don't worry, we will make socialism with a human face and then everything will be OK. But then as you know. Zdenek fled to Austria and Jiří ran to Italy. I used to meet them both, in different places. Pelicán at the END conventions in Perugia and Lund. Zdenek lived in Austria.

What was your role in organizing the Women's March for Peace in 1981?

The peace movement needed to take a much more decisive step. I contacted Eva Nordland, Raket Pettersen and a few others. I found Eva through reading



Women's Peace March.

about the movements in the newspapers, I phoned her and we came together. The idea came up of a peace march to Paris from Copenhagen – not from Norway because there is the sea. As a symbolic gesture we decided to start on the 22nd of June, the date when the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, and to finish it on the 6th of August, when Hiroshima was attacked. This was the message for both sides. They agreed.

But Eva said to me “Tair, of course we will mobilise, Norway, Finland and so on, but can you also mobilise your contacts?” I asked my contacts – communist parties as well as some pacifists etc. Then I went to the leaderships of the communist parties. The French and[East] German communist parties were completely against it. The leader of the East German Communist Party Hermann Axen wrote a letter to the Soviet leadership saying “That guy Tair Tairo goes to speak to communists in Sweden or Denmark...They are our plans, not your plans!”

Also Manfred Feist, head of the International Department of the Socialist Unity Party in East Germany, who was married to the daughter of Erich Honecker, protested. The French communist party protested: “We will not

participate in the peace movement!” The Norwegian women said, “We will have to do something because we will be going through Germany and there will be no German people [joining us]. I said “Don’t worry. Go ahead!” The French refused: *Le Humanité* would not even publish a piece on what was taking place.

But anyway, I worked with communists, non-communists, women, religious groups – everything. It started, and it worked. I walked with them up to Roskilde, came back, and at every point people were amazed that it was possible.

When we reached Paris it was a fantastic scene. Everybody was tired. Thousands of Scandinavians and no hospitality from the French side. They stayed in one of the stadiums. The only thing we could get was water, to wash ourselves. But there was a big meeting at which E.P. Thompson spoke on behalf of the Europeans, Eva Nordland on behalf of the organizers, and Claude Bourdet from the French leftists. I was the last speaker I appealed: “Now we go on with Peace March number 2 to Moscow! We’ll make Gromyko surrender!”

I went to the Soviet Embassy and sent a cable. I said “The peace march is over. But by the autumn millions of Europeans will protest because I know that on the eve of Disarmament Week there’ll be millions and millions, and we will finish with the missiles.” The counsellor of the embassy, Rubinsky, read my cable and said “No, comrade Tair, what are you saying? No, we can’t send such a cable.” I said “Send it! There’ll be millions and millions protesting and we have to do something major with the Americans.” And you know there were millions demonstrating – In London, Bonn... It was on the cover of *Newsweek* and there were articles in all the papers. I have many cuttings from Norwegian and Danish papers about myself...We have a film made by an American journalist about the Peace March. Anyhow it took place. Reagan made a statement...

Were you gradually having an impact on the bigger processes?

I published an article – a comparison of the warfare of the United States and Russia. The Pentagon started to reply to me – I had a dialogue with the Pentagon! I came back to Moscow and people said “Tair, Minister of Defence Ustinov is quite unhappy. What are you doing with our power? You are publishing things that are not relevant.” I said “Tell Ustinov not to worry about what I do, and not to interfere. I am telling Europeans that they have to wake up,

otherwise they are finished, kaput. We cannot stop Tomahawks – 10 minutes and there is no Leningrad, no Moscow. 10 – 15 minutes and we are finished. You can't do anything.”

I could feel that there was panic in the Politburo. Once I met Gromyko and had a long talk with him in New York. He asked how I happened to be there. I said, “Comrade Andrei Andreyevich, I am sending cables once a week.” He said “Yes, I know. We read your cables.” So, that was enough for me!

In the autumn of 1981 on the 25th of December Ronald Reagan said in his Christmas Radio Appeal that those Europeans who marched against American missiles were paid by a Russian in the WPC in Helsinki. “We agree. I suggest the Zero Option – we eliminate our missiles and the Russians should do the same.” I sent a cable. “Our victory. Let us accept it.” It’s a long story, of course. Russia didn’t accept it, but the situation changed after Gorbachev came to power. We had those old guys in power. They didn’t want to take risks. And then it happened in Reykjavik: Washington and Moscow signed a Treaty to eliminate medium-range missiles. I know both of the guys who worked in the process of negotiating the text of the INF Treaty – Alexey Obuhov on the Russian side and someone by the name of Glintman on the American side. They made a draft, which was signed.



Peace activist marching to Red Square in Moscow.

How did your view on and relationship with Soviet communism change over the years?

Of course I found myself in politics more as a side-activity, and not as a profession. I refused to go to Vienna... it was in 1971 or 1972. At that time I was returning from the library once and in the windows I saw 130 portraits of Lenin, celebrating the centenary of his birth. And I said these people are crazy. What are they doing? You can't do this! To celebrate Lenin you have to have a new kind of policy. Believe it or not I spent 6 months in the library writing something. It was in 1970-71. I had written a new draft programme for the CPSU. I criticised what was put forward by Khrushchev. I said it was rubbish – trash. It has nothing to do with theory. This discredits the Soviet Communist Party and the Marxist movement. I wrote a book, a sort of a research and I wrote a letter to Brezhnev – June 12th 1970. It was a short criticism of the Communist Party of that time and its official programme.

There are 14 pages on why I criticised the programme of the CPSU. I wrote that those who wrote this programme, work with scissors and not with their brains. They took bits from different parts of Marx and Engels without realizing, without understanding what was written. I handed over my papers to a reception window in the building of the Central Committee. I phoned a friend of mine, Sasha Vorobyov, who was from Kiev and had a relative working in the Headquarters of the Communist Party.

Sasha promised to try to find out what could happen with my manuscripts. From the youth movement some people suggested sending the text on the CPSU to Gorbachev because one of the heads of the Youth Committee was from Stavropol and he was good friends with Gorbachev.

I also asked Sasha to push his guy, who was a consultant to the leadership of the Central Committee. After 6 months I got a call. A man from the KGB wanted to meet me. I didn't know he was from the KGB. He told me "Tair, we know that you have written such a book. Did you give it to anyone in the West?" "To whom?" I asked. "Eurocommunists – Italians, French." I said "No, of course not." "We know you are a good man, but Tair, don't give it to anyone. We know that it is a really interesting book." Andropov was Chairman of the KGB at the time. "It is not the right time for such an event. The main thing now is the peace programme of Comrade Brezhnev." "Ok" I said.

Later Sasha told me the following story: The scientific consultants took my manuscript and gave it to Mikhail Suslov. Suslov was the number two man in

the leadership of the Communist party. After a couple of weeks on a Monday morning they came for tea with lemon and small cookies. And after a couple of weeks they asked Comrade Suslov if he had read that piece? He said yes. They asked: “Why don’t we take it and discuss it with competent people?” Suslov replied: “Do you want me to put this to the Politburo? If I put this to Politburo they’ll behead me!” He was afraid. The number-two man in the Communist party and in the country was afraid to even raise the question! This was one of my efforts to provoke change in the stagnating situation in the USSR.

But I continued to work on my doctorate. I defended it and became a professor. I travelled quite intensively to different kinds of seminars. I was included in the international group of lawyers – Dennis Pritt from the UK, among others.

I was also in the International Group of Lawyers Against Apartheid led by Poulet Person- Matis, a member of the royal family in Brussels. I used to go to Brussels to prepare papers. There was also a committee for human rights in Central America. Eventually, when I came to Helsinki, I linked up with the International Chile Commission in which Jacob Söderman was chairman.

Did you have regular contacts with Yevgeni Primakov over the years?

While in Helsinki I had to report regularly to Primakov since he was nominated Vice President of the WPC.

When Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan it was just in the beginning of the campaign against nuclear arms. During one of my regular visits to Moscow I went to the office of Primakov who at that time was a Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences. Actually, I had to meet him whenever I came to Moscow, and report on my activities. I asked “Why on earth did we enter Afghanistan? We want to raise Europeans against the missiles and we enter Afghanistan! We entered Czechoslovakia, Hungary, now Afghanistan. Who will trust us?” Primakov told me that we had to take measures:

“The Americans made a decision on the deployment of missiles with nuclear arms close to our borders, we respond to them!”

I said “Yevgeny Maksimovich, there is a well-written book written by Anatoly Halfin whom I happen to know. His study is about the controversies between the UK and Russia over Afghanistan in the 19th century. The book was

even translated into English and published by Oxford University Press in 1962. He worked in the Institute of Oriental Studies. In the book he concluded “I do not recommend that anyone should enter Afghanistan. They will be defeated completely!” So not even Primakov knew about this author and his book.

Primakov was a good administrator and a good journalist, his opinion about the situation in the WPC was very important for me. I tried to visit his office regularly and to create the impression that I was following his wise advice. But it was difficult for me because there were constant complaints coming from different sources. WPC President Romesh Chandra, one of the former leaders of the Indian communists, didn't like it that I was visiting many countries in Europe and he was not. He visited Geneva, Vienna and New York because of international organisations. He was not allowed to enter the United Kingdom, so there was a bit of conflict between the two of us. Moscow was of course in favour of Chandra. Leaders of the Soviet Peace Committee and Primakov were strongly warning me that I should always try to find a common language with him, they used to say “Tair you have to work with him.” So I tried to survive any way I could. It was not easy.

After the Womens Peace Marches a film, *Rings on the Water*, was made 1983 by the American documentary film maker Mercedes (Chiquita) Gregory and her colleague from Norway. And the story goes further. Somehow the film became popular. Some in the peace committee felt they were doing a good job. It was really good that the peace movements were developing. At one point a decision was made that the leadership of the Peace Committee should be presented with a few state decorations and medals. Lokshin, Kharkardin, Orel – they were all given medals. I asked if I could also get some honorary decorations. “We don't have any more medals”, was the answer. So give me at least some wooden stuff, I insisted. Finally, in order to celebrate my role in the peace marches, they gave me 300 roubles.

When was your first END convention?

Berlin in 1983 was very crucial. I was ready to go but they sent others. I suggested to Eva Nordland to raise the questions of new thinking. It was the first time, a chance to introduce the idea of new thinking. Later I took part in several Conventions: Perugia and Lund, among others. Oleg Kharkardin, the secretary and administrative leader of the Soviet Peace Committee, was against my

travels. He thought that Romesh Chandra would be irritated and opposed my contacts with Western peace movements.

Did the tensions between You and the Soviet Peace Committee grow fairly early during your work at the WPC?

There came a point when the people in Moscow wanted to replace me, to kick me out. Their efforts began already in 1982 – 83. They thought that the peace movement was on the rise. Some persons in the Peace Committee were ready to replace me.

OK, what could I do? Juri Zhukov did go to Andropov because he was a Peace Committee chairman at that time. Zhukov went straight to the office of Yuri Andropov, the leader of the country and the Communist Party. Zhukov took his aide Vladimir Kokashwili with him. As Kokashwili later recalled, Zhukov said: “Comrade Andropov, everything is going well. Marches, protests! We are doing great things in the Peace Committee. We owe great thanks to you. But we think there is one small point. There is our representative Tairov. He cannot handle this. He has spoilt his relations with Chandra. We have other good people who are ready to replace him. Zhukov was also a member of the Central Committee of Communist party and a very well-known person in the country. According to Kokashwili, who was present at the meeting, Andropov was silent for a second and said “Don’t touch Tairov.”

Later I found out that the KGB people knew about my contacts and activities and still decided to let me stay on for a while. I cannot explain why. But couple of years later when the decision was made to withdraw me from the WPC a secret cable to the authorities was sent from Stockholm, where I was taking part in a meeting, according to which I might escape to the West and seek political asylum, so it was suggested that I should be recalled immediately. Information about the cable became known later and a journalist from a popular newspaper openly criticized this act.

When I came to Helsinki and started to work, I was invited to the embassy after just two or three days. KGB people were there. They said “Comrade Tair. You are here in a responsible position. You have to make written statements on everyone you meet, what they say, and who they are.” I said to them “Listen, I meet many people. How can I? It’s impossible.” And I phoned to Moscow, to

Vitaly Shaposhnikov, deputy head of international department in the Communist party at the Central Committee. He said OK, call me tomorrow. I called him the next day. He said “Look Tair, I spoke to Philipp Bobkov, who was the first deputy chairman of the KGB.

By that time it was an accepted ideological trend that the KGB was no longer as powerful an institution as it had been, and that it was under Communist Party control. I assume that Shaposhnikov could have asked to instruct his officers in Helsinki informally and in a friendly manner not to bother a Soviet representative in the WPC.

“Don’t worry if someone asks you. Just tell him to go to hell! Do what you want.” I had complete freedom. This was in 1979. It was fantastic for me. It was half a joke. But then none of the KGB people came to me...So I was absolutely independent.

What about Daniel Ellsberg and the Greenpeace ship visit to Leningrad? How did you manage to organize that?

Yes, the Greenpeace ship Sirius that went to St Petersburg in 1982 was an interesting activity.

Daniel Ellsberg contacted me once while visiting Finland. He was rather active in campaigning against

nuclear tests carried out by the USSR and the USA. I supported his proposal to let the Greenpeace ship arrive in the harbour of Leningrad and make the trip into a sort of protest against Soviet underground tests. I managed to convince the leadership in Kremlin to let it happen through many cables addressed to Moscow that I used to send via the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki. I told Daniel that his people should apply for visas at the Soviet consulate and start their journey.

Most of the crew didn’t have passports – only driving licenses. When they came to the consulate a Russian diplomat called me. “Tair, what kind of people with strange clothes do we have here? Why should we give them visas?” I said “Look, these people with dirty trousers are the only pacifists I have!” So they all got visas. They were completely surprised. The visa was on special paper. Anyway, that’s a long story.

When Daniel Ellsberg came to Finland it was the time when there was a big

women's meeting in Gothenburg. And he came from there to Finland. I didn't go to Leningrad myself. I visited the boat in Helsinki but not in Leningrad.

The Greenpeace ship came back to Helsinki and Daniel spent some time there. We met and spoke a lot. I made a bet with Ellsberg for \$10 that I will force Gorbachev to declare a unilateral ban on underground nuclear testing. Dan thought I was joking, but then I tried. I called Bruce Kent in London and found out that CND was preparing big rallies to protest against nuclear testing by superpowers.

I decided to send a very special cable to the Soviet leadership. Gorbachev was already in power and there was a chance that he might read my reports. I wrote in my cable that thousands of protesters around the world will mark the Hiroshima day in London and elsewhere by throwing rotten eggs and ink at the walls of Soviet and US embassies to condemn nuclear tests. So this is a unique and exclusive chance that we should unilaterally declare a ban on testing at least for half a year, and call upon Americans to refrain from testing and see what happens. We will not resume testing for 6 months and if the US sticks to their policy on testing during these months, we shall accuse them and go ahead with the testing as well. But if the Americans also stop, then it would be kept in force.

I immediately received a phone call from Moscow: "Tair, it is not your business to give advice to the Soviet leadership, we will never do this, don't be awkward in your position." The next day Gorbachev made a statement repeating, in all essence, my proposal. Ellsberg was still in Helsinki, he was surprised. He said I had probably agreed with the KGB in advance. We became good friends, later he visited my home in Moscow. The times were changing.

What about your contacts with the U.S. peace movements - the Freeze campaign and others?

I had been there many times. David Cortright, a leader of SANE, wrote a book 'Peace Works'. It included some words about my role in the peace movement, and he dedicated a copy of it to me with words: "Best wishes to a friend and colleague who was there in the heart of the struggle for a more peaceful, sane world".

With the Freeze movement, I was there to attend some seminars. I once went to the Riverside Church in Manhattan, where I met many Freeze people

as well as E.P. Thompson.

Once I visited Washington, and went to the Center for Defense Information. It was founded in Washington by Admiral Gene La Rocque. I met him several times. I said “Gene, I am planning a big gathering of generals for peace. I have Harbottle from the UK, Sanguinetti from France, Pasti from Italy, Koumanakakos from Greece...”. He said: “Look Tair. If I join you, I am finished. I do this job independently. We all have to work independently. So I will continue to give adequate information.” Another general I had contacts with was Gert Bastian, the husband of Petra Kelly.

Then there was a great meeting in 1982 in Central Park in New York; a big demonstration with two million people.

I met Cora Weiss in New York during that demonstration. and since then I have been in close cooperation with her. I also had contacts with her husband Peter Weiss, a well-known lawyer, who once served on the US delegation at the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

Through him and Cora Weiss I found a woman who was counsellor to the judge at the Nuremberg process – Mary Kaufmann. There were many lawyers in America with whom I had contacts. In the end there was a movement called “Examination of the Legality of Nuclear Weapons”.

Sean McBride was one of the initiators, and there were many prominent lawyers and persons like Carl Sagan, who was also a member. On the Russian side there was only me. But I knew Richard Falk, a leading international lawyer in California, quite well. Later in 1987 one of the important members of the Manhattan project, physicist Herbert York, invited me to lecture on the UCLA campus in Los Angeles on the peace movement’s impact on the world disarmament process.

The lectures concentrated on Peace movements in the East and West. Herb is an author of the book *Making Weapons, Talking Peace*. A representative of the University even wanted me to stay and work there. Of course, I refused. They did pay good money for a visiting professor and that helped me in various ways. It was also very helpful for me in compiling my art collection.

I have a small booklet by Jean Stead, a correspondent for *The Guardian*, called ‘END special report – Moscow Independent Peace Group’. She also covered the peace march in 1982. There was an article about me. I quote: “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 visas for the Norwegian women and for smoothing over the arguments that the Scandinavians got involved in among themselves and the Soviet Peace Committee.”

What were your contacts with the physicians?

There was a congress in 1984. As soon as I arrived in Helsinki, I wrote a cable to the Politburo and said “You must involve doctors, physicians. They must say that if there is a nuclear war humanity will not survive. The horrible consequences should be exposed.” And I’m sure that helped set up the movement of Chasov and Bernard Lown – key persons in Physicians against nuclear war.

Yes, I was present at the meeting of that movement in Helsinki in 1984 together with my friends Ilkka and Vappu Taipale, among others.

I was not directly involved in the congress. I just had contacts with Soviet participants.

Getting closer to the mid-1980s, you left the WPC and then you established Civic Peace. What led you to take that initiative? It was a very controversial move in the Soviet Union at that time.

My position in the World Peace Council was important but I said that I am ready to leave. Partly because I couldn’t stay there for more than 6 years. “Find someone else who would replace me”, I said.

They didn’t find anyone. They were very rude towards me. I don’t know why. What happened was that during a meeting in Stockholm – the Peace Committee was there too – I started to feel ill. I said that I would go back to Helsinki. I told Kosta Ivanov to inform the peace delegation from Russia, which was responsible for tickets, and I left for Helsinki.

The day I left, they started to look for me – where is Tairov? Kosta would not tell them. The KGB resident in Stockholm sent a cable to Moscow: Tairov has escaped to the West. He is not in Stockholm. He is not in Helsinki. I came to Helsinki. My family was in Moscow. My temperature was about 39. In the morning I got a call. “Tair?” “Yes.” “You are in Helsinki?” “Come immediately to the embassy!” “Ok.” I went to the embassy. There was a cable: “Leave your position immediately. We give you 72 hours.” I asked, “Why so urgently?” The cable had been sent two days earlier. It meant I had 24 hours left. “Yes!” Then I had to leave. (There was a big article in Komsomolskaya Pravda about me.

Ambassador Boris Pankin, now living in Stockholm, said he had never said that I was defecting.)

This was in February or March 1986. So they kicked me out. I came to Moscow at the end of the month. But formally they had to replace me at the session of the Presidium of the WPC. I said: "Look I've done so much. You could replace me at the session." But Oleg Kharkhardin was against my participation in the forthcoming session of the WPC. April 26 was the day when the Presidium took place in Sofia and I would have wanted to be there. I was so upset – I mean I had done so much. They did not include me in the Soviet delegation and kicked me out. By the way, The WPC session took place the 26th of April in Sofia, the day of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

I came in contact with independent peace movements – Juri Krasnorudsky and others. I established the Foundation for Social Innovations. There was a big article of mine on the front page of Komsomolskaya Pravda, in December 1987. The Foundation was active until the fall of the Soviet Union. After that there were still some activities, but I didn't participate at that stage anymore. After some time, it was closed down.

I wrote, "Let us bring all sorts of ideas – we will implement these ideas." Then many people came. We registered. It was actually the first real NGO. We gave them shelter, the possibility for many new independent movements and organisations to be under our name. Slowly I started to print articles about civil society. Some people were irritated. "What the hell are you doing?" In the Peace Committee they had a meeting and Lokshin said: "Tairov brought the anti-Soviet slogan of 'civil society'; it is against Soviet Union!"

Oleg Kharhardin replaced me at the WPC. At meetings of the secretariat, as I was told, he was absolutely indifferent. He didn't realize where he was. A year later he was kicked out. Vladimir Orel, deputy chair of the Peace Committee, replaced him. He deposited money in private banks and the interest went into his pocket. I also made a couple of deposits and for the money we got we bought a new apartment for the members of the secretariat. Orel was also kicked out. Then they brought in a third guy. He came... he didn't know where he was. He was just picking mushrooms...

How did you view developments after 1991, with Yeltsin, Rutskoi and other turbulent events ?

Rutskoi has still appeared and given interviews over the years. He has criticized Russia for accepting the “Jewish God. He is not our God!”, he says. Well, he’s ok. No one touches him. He thinks that they made a big mistake in 1993. He admits that they should have done things the other way. But, you know, they lost the confrontation, so what can you do?

Yeltsin was undoubtedly popular. I said in Helsinki in the 1980s that Yeltsin would be the future president of Russia. People said “Tair, what are you saying?” Gorbachev, with all due respect, couldn’t lead further. He was talking and talking. They were ridiculing him for having oral diarrhoea, that he couldn’t close his mouth. So we supported Yeltsin because people hoped that he’d bring democracy and continue perestroika and in a much more radical way.

What about your contacts with the Olof Palme Center and the Frierdrich Ebert Foundation?

For a while I was in the Peace Coalition with help from the Olof Palme International Center. They funded many seminars, conferences. Then I said I must look after my family, my finances. I gave up and went back to Tashkent to deal with the arts.

Besides the Palme Center I cooperated with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for a very long time and have had very good strong contacts until recently. I was with the Ebert Foundation in conferences in Moscow and Bonn several times and met all the leaders of the Social Democrats in Germany, except Schroeder.

At one of the meetings Willy Brandt was there at the reception. I met him there. I used to have contacts and had met the friends from the Social Democratic party of the FRG many times, and once I participated in the conference organised by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Peter Schultze from the Foundation once invited me to a seminar in Bonn in 1987, where I was lucky to meet and speak with Willy Brandt.

He came to me and said “Tair, It’s very strange. Gorbachev received me. I came back and after a little while I wrote him a letter. In it I said ‘Mikhail, you have to change the party. You have to declare that you are leading the party

towards social democracy.” And Brandt said to me “I never got an answer from Gorbachev.” And he asked me what happened. I said that when I go to Moscow I’ll check into what happened.

So, what about Gorbachev’s view on social democracy?

I came back to Moscow and I knew people in the international department. One of the guys, Evgeny Ambartsumov, was living not far from me. He said “Yes the letter arrived. But Gorbachev never tried to do anything about it.” I myself told Gorbachev’s assistant Andrey Grachev to let him decide that he wants to come back to the old Russian social democracy – he may say that Lenin was too radical and we should come back to the old genuine name.

The Communist Party had no perspective. It was just a theory, official thinking, utopian thinking. So he was not ready; he was afraid that if he starts this, the members of the Politburo would not support him and he could lose his position. When he was brought back from his brief detention in Crimea, he stepped down from the plane and made a statement: “Now at last, now is the time for the Leninist communist party to rule the country.” But Russia was different. Yeltsin was already in power. On 10 November 1991 there had been a congress of the Communist Party of Russia and they invited Gorbachev to speak. It was on television. He said: “Comrades, now we are like in 1941. No step backwards. We are faced by separatists. We will never let the separatists ruin the unity of the USSR”.

I was shocked. I immediately ran to get the newspapers. He had this illusion up until the very last moment that he could stay in power. He didn’t want to shift to social democracy. He could have done so easily and been supported. After what happened I wrote a short memo to Communist Party leader Zyuganov. I said: “Declare yourself a socialist party. Everyone in East Europe, all the communists have changed except East Germany. The Hungarians, all the Baltic states... Why don’t you do this?” I didn’t meet him, of course, but his aide spoke to me and said: “He refuses to do so because he’s afraid that he will lose the electorate. He’s counting on the old generation to keep him in parliament and on a good salary!” Very simple. If he had changed maybe everything would have been different.

So, Gorbachev – of course he’s a great man – played a tremendous role in

democracy. But he was an ordinary man, not highly educated. He should have kept to his position. He should not have given up. I think that was his main mistake. He ran as a social democratic candidate in the presidential elections. 2–3 years later, but it was too late by then.

I cooperated closely with the Olof Palme International Center. We had an illusion that some people here would form a social democratic party, so we approached people in the Duma and the chairman of the Duma. We had several meetings but it didn't work. Of course people said 'Yes'. They formed a group, they declared themselves social democrats, but they couldn't convince people to join them. Even now, there is the Communist Party for Social Justice. They declare that they support social democracy, but they do not.

I thought that Gorbachev could have saved the situation if he would have done this early enough. He might have managed to convince the Europeans to continue supporting his policy. He didn't do this. How could he convince the communists? It was clear that it wouldn't work.

You started the Civic Peace organisation after you left the WPC, but how did you manage to arrange the END convention in Moscow?

At that time, we first set up the Foundation for Social Innovations. We just opened an account in the bank and invited all the newly emerging organisations to join, to give them a space within this account so that they could legally continue to function. There was no law that would stop us, so we seized the moment. I decided to bring all these NGOs together and set up a kind of coalition. It didn't work, although we brought together 10–15 organisations.

I was active in END during the late 1980s. We decided to have the END convention when we had the Liaison Committee meeting in Helsinki in 1990. The Civic Peace Coalition – I already had 5–6 organisations. We worked on that.

But we had problems with money of course. I



Programme of END convention, Moscow.



END Liaison Committee In Moscow, spring 1991; backrow, 4th from left Tair Tairov, 4th from right Folke Sundman; front row, 3rd from left Juri Krashnorutski (Moscow Trust Group), 2nd from right; Cay Sevon (Finnish Peace Committee).

had a small – not fully mine – apartment behind the hotel Minsk. We hired a place. We paid, we registered ourselves. But slowly it was taken from us by a criminal group who attacked us.

In Helsinki the decision was made to have the END convention in Moscow in 1991. Some people were against it at first – especially Finns – not you – some young guys. After the decision, I came to Moscow and started to form a preparatory committee. In order to make this influential, I invited the leaders of newly emerging political parties – Zhirinovskiy and a few others. There was the party Democratic Russia – I invited them. There were other different groups. I invited everyone who was for democracy. Oleg Rummyantsev was one of the guys in Democratic Perestroika.

It started to work. Of course, we had to spend some money to pay for the building. In this respect Komsomolskaya Pravda was very helpful because people started to send money to the Foundation for Social Innovations. I didn't

deal with the money, but Gennady Alferenko was dealing with it. There was enough but not much. Not like today. We rented the place in advance. I included in the preparatory committee Yelena Bonner, the wife of Andrei Sakharov, and she came. Anyhow it did start to work. This was long before the coup of 1991. Nobody knew what would happen. In Helsinki it was decided that the five-day convention would start on in Moscow on August 14. It did work. We had several press conferences. We were in the final stages of perestroika, you see, you could do anything.

Some of my friends asked me later: “Tair, what stupid things are you doing? Go into business. You will become rich.” They became billionaires. I was thinking of selling computers. Many Americans helped me very much. As I mentioned, I was in New York, and in California as a visiting professor and I had friends. They said they could supply me with computers.

But I was looking around and I found that it was an absolutely criminal situation. There were shootings and killings every day. Hundreds, thousands of people were killed in those days because of rivalries, so I was afraid to go into business. Afterwards, I left for Tashkent, opened an art gallery, and worked there, and people used to come and buy. Madeline Albright was my client too, we spent hours together at one point.

A question on the Foundation for Social Innovations. Was it a multipurpose organisation not just a peace organisation?

Yes, the idea was to give a shelter to newly emerging peace and civil society organisations. We had 20 of them, many of them could not have a bank account. We said “come and we will give you a bank account”. – We brought civil society organisations together. We wanted them to have a starting point.

I was in New York and met with leading American foundations: the Rockefeller brothers; Soros himself came to my seminar for two days. I said: “Come to Moscow and help us...” And they came. We had a seminar in Moscow for many representatives of the different funds. They told me: “Tair, there is no law, how can we act? What is the guarantee? We can’t give money...” The Soviet Union had changed. So we had seminars on how to register NGOs, what to call them, what their charter would be. The Moscow authorities had to give permission to register.

But the Foundation failed. Why?

After the coup, the situation in the country changed completely. People started to fight for their physical, political, and economic survival. For example, Memorial immediately left the Foundation and said it had other ideas. For a little while one of the banks of the Foundation for Social Innovations continued.

But Democratic Perestroika decided to form a party. Liberal Unions decided to form a liberal party. And after the coup it was a completely different country. We had no money because people stopped sending money to the Foundation. There was still some money but It was not under my control.

What happened to the 15 000 innovations that you collected from people on your computer?

I don't think they are in any archive or database. It was a mess. There were people who were looking after this but I didn't care... for me it was too much.

The only thing we did that was different were several programmes that were carried out. One of them was 'My Discovery of America' where we sent hundreds of people who had never been abroad to the US. The other programme was 'Road to Alaska', for contacts between the United States and Russia in the Far East. These worked. So yes, there were a few initiatives that did work.

But then what to do? I couldn't set up a business so I had some money from the California lectures, and I got some money from Denmark. I had a column in the newspaper Information, so I decided to give up all this stuff for some time.

What happened with the changes of stance on END by the Soviets, from accusations of being CIA agents to having the convention in Moscow in 1991?

During my meetings in Moscow in the early 1980s I regularly had to fight against accusations that I was cooperating with imperialist agents like E.P. Thompson. Even while preparing Peace March 1982 my proposed slogan, 'No Nuclear weapons in Europe –East and West', was not really accepted by the leaders of Soviet Peace Committee. "Tair", they said, "You are putting equal responsibility on the USA and USSR." I was also criticised for bringing some independent peace groups into the process.

There was extensive debate in Komsomolskaya Pravda, including a series

of articles against me (just after I was sacked from the World Peace Council). I established contact with newly emerging organisations. I started to strongly criticise the Peace Committee. Suddenly there was a long article against me by the chairman of the Peace Committee about my work in Helsinki saying that I wanted to prolong my presence in Finland and that there were rumours that I was hooked by Western agencies. “Tairov likes to be there, not with us, that’s why he criticises us.” Then I replied that I was in Helsinki as long as I was appointed. And I had said that you could replace me – and I recommended the person who could replace me. I thought that Lokshin would come, because he knew the situation and despite all my criticism, he was a proper person. Instead of him they sent Kharkharkadin – an old, tired guy with whom I was not on good terms.

Then there was a big two-page article about me – a good article – about who I am and what I have done. The article somehow strengthened my position. It was written by Olga Kutchina, a well-known writer and poet. That helped me very much. It gave me some moral clout.

The Peace Committee had a building, money, machinery, infrastructure, so I had an idea that maybe this would continue. I proposed the following to the Peace Committee people: Let us accept that there are independent peace movements in the West. Let us do something together with them. They will pay for themselves. We pay for ourselves. Let us bring them all together, even change the World Peace Council.

I spoke to the Greek composer, Mikis Theodorakis, and said: “We need your name. You don’t have to be there every day.” I sent a long memo to the Peace Committee suggesting that Mikis Theodorakis should be elected as the next President of the WPC. They said: “Tair, what are you doing. Bloody hell! We have such a good friend in Romesh Chandra!” So it didn’t work.

I understood that sooner or later the Peace Coalition or Civic Peace would not be able to survive after the END convention. What to do? Then the coup took place, one day after the END convention. But just before the coup it was declared that a meeting will take place in Novo-Ogaryovo soon to work out a new concept for the Soviet Union.

In the years when Gorbachev was in power there was open discussion about the future of the Soviet Union. One idea was to change the old system and turn the country to a kind of Confederation. Under the pressure from different republics it was decided that on the 21st of August of 1991 in the suburbs of Moscow -Novo-Ogarevo, a conference would take place to discuss the proposals

for a new confederation.

The ultimate idea of me and my friends was to dissolve the Soviet Union, declare a confederation, give freedom to the republics, and draft a new agreement. But on the 19th of August the coup took place. The same morning immediately after the coup, I was talking on British TV: “Please help Yeltsin, if he’s not already arrested. I’m sure is already arrested. All the papers are closed. Now we are faced with a horrible conservative coup d’état. I call on all of you to protest.” It was 9 o’clock in the morning.

The next day I was invited to London to be interviewed. Afterwards a British journalist told me: “Tair, Britain is in love with Gorbachev. You are supporting Yeltsin, we understand.” I said: ”But it won’t work. I also sympathise with Gorbachev but he himself is responsible for what happened.”

After the coup there was some uncertainty about what would happen. On one occasion Yeltsin’s people approached me to ask me to join the Foreign Ministry. They wanted me to be deputy minister for foreign affairs. I said no, I don’t want to serve.

Anyway, we know what happened. It was a revenge by different kinds of people. On the other hand, they were enthusiastic about democracy and thought that now we will have justice and freedom. There real was freedom of the press for a little while. But privatisation was slowly taking place. At that point I decided to give up. I went to Tashkent. Established a gallery with my friends to buy and sell. I collected textiles. I worked there for some time and made a very good collection. I wanted to open a museum. A British company advertised my gallery as a new private museum. But the local authorities were against me.

You didn’t believe in Yeltsin’s project...?

I was watching what happened in the country, what happened to the economy, to the finances. I had about 30 000 roubles. All I could save during my work. In one day, 30 000 roubles turned into just 3 roubles: inflation, reforms. Suddenly what to do? It was not just me but many of my friends as well. Privatisation started, so at that point I decided that I have no prospects as a person here. There were some efforts by the people of Egor Gaidar who knew me and suggested that I might go to the Duma as one of the representatives of the newly emerging party of Democratic Russia. I said “No Sergei Mikhailovich, I don’t want to be in politics anymore.” For me it was enough to have been in

the World Peace Council, to report on how great we are. I was still in favour of Yeltsin to a certain extent, but I thought that he had lost control.

He was a heavy drinker, a habit we did not know about earlier. We found out when we in Foundation of Social Innovation asked Yeltsin to make a tour of US cities to collect money and buy and bring back disposable syringes which our medicine needed very much. When I went to the US to check what happened, Jim Harrison, who was responsible for that visit showed me the report about what he had done – drinking every day. He said “Tair, it was the first time that a drunken man was received by President Bush.” So Yeltsin did not bring what was promised.

Of course I could well have become a professor of law or international relations. But I didn’t agree to this. I had left teaching and research earlier when I was with Primakov.

Back to the Moscow END meeting...

Some people in the Soviet preparatory committee, two or three women and men in business, were suspicious that I am making big money out of this. We had a big reception in one of the restaurants for the members of the Liaison Committee with expenses paid by the Soviet preparatory committee. It was OK. After a while these people from the Russian business community were trying to condemn me. Luckily enough, I kept all the receipts.

The convention was working. Of course the Peace Committee was jealous. They didn’t like what they saw and they didn’t participate in the preparatory committee. They refused.

All the people who came paid for their travel themselves. We had some expenses for food.

What about the Communist Party, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the KGB... ?

I think there were many KGB people in the hall. I think they knew something about the possible coup. Somebody told me “Tair, there are people we know, but so many who we don’t know!” They were watching. For visa problems I used my old contacts in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and they were very

helpful informing embassies abroad to be ready to issue the visas for invitations from Civic Peace under my signature.

I chaired the Convention. I opened and closed Plenary sessions of the Convention and some people didn't like this. I made the closing speech thanking Dmitry Petrov and others for their work. Members of the Soviet preparatory committee for the Convention came from different newly emerging political parties and groups so it was rather difficult to reach common decisions. From that point I was grateful to Dmitry Petrov who helped me very much in avoiding conflicts and solving problems. I understood there was some animosity from some people. They were not happy I was there. At the time the Communist Party was no longer what it used to be. There was already a split. They had no coherent position towards the Convention. But Yanayev knew we were there. Those who were behind the coup knew there were 600 foreign participants. Of course they knew. They told me later – "Tair, why the hell have you done this?" I said, if I knew you were going to stage a coup perhaps I would have rejected this!" But there were some new emerging forces in Russia. They came to me, and there were two or three very popular politicians. They said "It's great what you have done. You helped us to rise to power.!"

Did Yanayev ever suggest that a coup would take place?

No. It was completely unexpected. I knew Boris Pugo quite well. We once shared a room in a hostel. He was responsible in Komsomol for Uzbekistan, so I knew him quite well.

What happened to Boris Pugo is interesting and unclear. On 18 August, he was sitting around the table with Hans Modrow, Prime Minister of the GDR. That story was told to me by a person who worked in the staff of the Communist party headquarters. According to him, from the words of an interpreter, somebody came to Pugo sitting in dining room with Modrow and said there is a phone call for him. He said "excuse me Hans". He came back and said it was a call from Gorbachev. Gorbachev probably asked Pugo to go to Moscow for some reason. On the morning of August 19th, when Yanayev declared the coup, Pugo was sitting with him. That makes me believe that Gorbachev might have had some suspicions.

Organisers of the coup new about the big international event in Moscow,

which was the 10th END Convention. Later I found out that initial plans were that the coup should have been declared on Saturday, August 17th. But they knew about the Convention and did not want the possible presence of foreign guests and witnesses. They didn't believe that people would go and protest if it was declared on Saturday, but on Monday they came back from their dachas and were ready to protest! In any case, the communist regime had no future. Sooner or later they would have fallen.

What happened to the property at Prospect Mira, the Soviet Peace Committee headquarters?

As far as I know all the premises, all the rooms have been privatized. They must have had some accounts in roubles. They didn't have currency abroad. The currency abroad was kept in Prague – this I know. When I was in Helsinki I was told “Tair, we have some money for you: \$10 000 for representation purposes. You can easily use this. There is more if you need it. You can order it from Prague. They will send you more.” When I came to Moscow to report to the bookkeeper every year, they'd say “Why don't you spend that money.” So I started to spend – not \$10 000 but some, and not very very often. The premises were, and still are owned by the Peace Committee. When privatisation took place, some parts could have been privatized. There are restaurants and different offices, no clear information. Lokshin was trying to find out what was happening with the privatisation. Some people gave him the signal – please keep silent.

Have you ever been threatened?

I was arrested once in Tashkent for participating in a meeting for human rights and freed later after international protest. There were some real threats from the very rich oligarch collectors to prevent my participation in large art shows. I am not involved in anything or any activity. I just sit here and watch.

What do you consider your biggest achievement?

The INF Treaty on elimination of medium range nuclear missiles in Europe is really a great achievement, and I made my modest contribution in making that possible through arranging European Peace Marches. Peace movements in Europe, the concept of END, should take credit for this historical moment.

The INF Treaty had established a long-awaited peace in Europe, both in the West and East of the continent, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation. Unfortunately, today the Treaty is not followed and is no longer in force. I regret that many leading politicians in Russia condemn Gorbachev for signing the Treaty in 1987 together with Reagan. But in due time we celebrated this achievement. The next day when Peace March '81 was over there was a big rally in Paris with thousands of people attending. I was one of the speakers together with E.P. Thompson and Eva Norland. We all invited millions of Europeans to mark the UN Disarmament week in the autumn by unprecedented mass demonstrations. I also called to start a new Peace March 82 to Moscow which was arranged by Scandinavians. This was another contribution to peace work.

I also consider the stopping of underground nuclear tests by the Soviet Union and the USA as a personal input of mine. I suggested it to Gorbachev, who accepted my idea and it could have saved many lives.

I might also have to include in my record of historical events the final END Convention in Moscow in August of 1991. The convention was under preparation for a year and started on the 14th of August and closed on Saturday, the 17th. The Coup was planned exactly for that day when most of Muscovites were expected to be outside of the city, at their dachas. The dates of the convention forced organisers of the Coup to postpone it until Monday the 19th but then people were back and fresh and ready to protest. The day the protests started many people thanked me for bringing so many participants from abroad to the Convention.

Recalling the past, I remember the Great Peace rally in New York in Central Park with 2 million participants in 1982. I was there and saw a large sign with the portraits of Reagan and Brezhnev each holding nuclear bombs in their hands with the caption "take the Toys from the Boys". Today we have other boys with the same, more dangerous toys. Can we take the toys away from them now? I do not know. What makes me worried, reading on the internet and watching world events, I notice more war movements than peace movements.

Nevertheless Peace is a sacred goal and may again become a creative force that I look forward to.

This is an edited version of a transcript of two recorded sessions made in Tair's home in Moscow 9-10 November 2018. The interview was conducted by Tair's long-time friends - Finnish peace activists Folke Sundman, Kalevi Suomela, Kalle Sysikaski and Ilkka Taipale. The transcript was made by Mark Waller, a colleague and friend of Tair in the 1980s. The editing of the text was done by Folke Sundman and Kimmo Wilska. Photos were provided by Timo Mielonen, Jaakko Ellisaari, Kalle Sysikaski, Folke Sundman and Peace Union.



The interview delegation from Finland – Ilkka Taipale, Kalevi Suomela, Kalle Sysikaski and Folke Sundman – in Moscow in November 2018.

TAIR TAIROV

- **born December 27, 1937** in Tashkent
- **graduated from** secondary school in Tashkent 1954
- **studies at** the Central State University, department of history, and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 1958-62
- **Institute of** State and Law of the Academy of Sciences 1962-66
- **Institute of** World Economy and International Relations 1967-71
- **Doctor of** International Law, Professor of History of International Relations 1972-78
- **Representative of** the Soviet Peace Committee in the World Peace Council and Director of the Information Centre of the WPC 1979-86 (in Helsinki)
- **Institute of** World Economy and International Relations in Moscow 1986-88
- **member of** the END (European Nuclear Disarmament) Liaison Committee 1984-91
- **Vice President** of the IPB, International Peace Bureau, in the 1990's
- **founder of** the Foundation for Social Innovations and Civic Peace Coalition 1987-91
- **Research in** the field of Central Asian Applied Arts 1992-2010

EUROPEAN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT APPEAL

We are entering the most dangerous decade in human history. A third world war is not merely possible, but increasingly likely. Economic and social difficulties in advanced industrial countries, crisis, militarism and war in the Third World compound the political tensions that fuel a demented arms race. In Europe, the main geographical stage for the East–West confrontation, new generations of ever more deadly nuclear weapons are appearing.

For at least twenty-five years, the forces of both the North Atlantic and the Warsaw alliances have each had sufficient nuclear weapons to annihilate their opponents, and at the same time to endanger the very basis of civilised life. But with each passing year, competition in nuclear armaments has multiplied their numbers, increasing the probability of some devastating accident or miscalculation.

As each side tries to prove its readiness to use nuclear weapons, in order to prevent their use by the other side, new more ‘usable’ nuclear weapons are designed and the idea of ‘limited’ nuclear war is made to sound more and more plausible. So much so that this paradoxical process can logically only lead to the actual use of nuclear weapons.

Neither of the major powers is now in any moral position to influence smaller countries to forgo the acquisition of nuclear armament. The increasing spread of nuclear reactors and the growth of the industry that installs them, reinforce the likelihood of world-wide proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby multiplying the risks of nuclear exchanges.

Over the years, public opinion has pressed for nuclear disarmament and détente between the contending military blocs. This pressure has failed. An increasing proportion of world resources is expended on weapons, even though mutual extermination is already amply guaranteed. This economic burden, in both East and West, contributes to growing social and political strain, setting in motion a vicious circle in which the arms race feeds upon the instability of the world economy and vice versa: a deathly dialectic.

We are now in great danger. Generations have been born beneath the shadow of nuclear war, and have become habituated to the threat. Concern has given way to apathy. Meanwhile, in a world living always under menace, fear extends through both halves of the European continent. The powers of the

military and of internal security forces are enlarged, limitations are placed upon free exchanges of ideas and between persons, and civil rights of independent-minded individuals are threatened, in the West as well as the East.

We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.

The remedy lies in our own hands. We must act together to free the entire territory of Europe, from Poland to Portugal, from nuclear weapons, air and submarine bases, and from all institutions engaged in research into or manufacture of nuclear weapons. We ask the two superpowers to withdraw all nuclear weapons from European territory. In particular, we ask the Soviet Union to halt production of the SS-20 medium range missile and we ask the United States not to implement the decision to develop cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles for deployment in Europe. We also urge the ratification of the SALT II agreement, as a necessary step towards the renewal of effective negotiations on general and complete disarmament.

At the same time, 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.

It will be the responsibility of the people of each nation to agitate for the expulsion of nuclear weapons and bases from European soil and territorial waters, and to decide upon its own means and strategy, concerning its own territory. These will differ from one country to another, and we do not suggest that any single strategy should be imposed. But this must be part of a continental

movement in which every kind of exchange takes place.

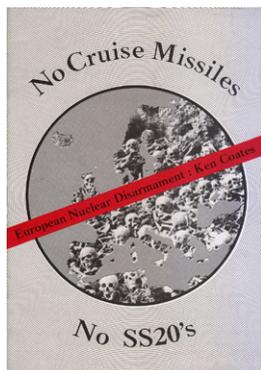
We must resist any attempt by the statesmen of East and West to manipulate this movement to their own advantage. We offer no advantage to either Nato or the Warsaw alliance. Our objectives must be to free Europe from confrontation, to enforce détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and, ultimately, to dissolve both great power alliances.

In appealing to fellow Europeans, we are not turning our backs on the world. In working for the peace of Europe we are working for the peace of the world. Twice in this century Europe has disgraced its claims to civilisation by engendering world war. This time we must repay our debts to the world by engendering peace.

This appeal will achieve nothing if it is not supported by determined and inventive action, to win more people to support it. We need to mount an irresistible pressure for a Europe free of nuclear weapons.

We do not wish to impose any uniformity on the movement nor to pre-empt the consultations and decisions of those many organisations already exercising their influence for disarmament and peace. But the situation is urgent. The dangers steadily advance. We invite your support for this common objective, and we shall welcome both your help and advice.

Launched on April 28th 1980



“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.”

Forty years after the launch of the European Nuclear Disarmament - the END - appeal its important to recall its history, also in light of the extremely worrying trends in today’s world. The INF Treaty has been annulled and the SALT agreement is also close to being disrupted. Super-power relations, now with China as an emerging player, are severely strained and the danger of a new nuclear arms build-up is imminent.

The END Appeal was a child of its time, the 80s, but many of its key thoughts are relevant. We need new initiatives for European nuclear and worldwide disarmament. We need new initiatives to bridge the various bloc divides and to ease the tensions that are gaining strength.

Professor Tair Tairov, the key person in this interview, was an active participant in events of the END processes.

Folke Sundman: “Tair somehow personifies certain key aspects of the whole END process. He came from the old establishment of the Soviet Union. At a fairly early stage he ran into great difficulties in fulfilling the role given to him within the World Peace Council, started to build contacts and networks across the old bloc divides, reached a point where his ‘double role’ was no longer acceptable to his employers, went back home and continued to promote new thinking within the Soviet Union, both through his diverse contacts with the political elite and the new actors in the civil society in the making. And thus, he was one brick in the complex process resulting in the new arms control agreements and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

His story as covered in this interview is of course his subjective version of events, nothing more and nothing less.”

A special word of thanks to the Leo Mechelin Foundation for its support to the project, including the interview visit to Moscow in Autumn 2018.