

Last Days of the USSR

gg Winter

Copyright © 2017 by gg Winter

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher at the address below.

Red Star Publishers
P.O. Box 1641
New York, NY 10027
www.RedStarPublishers.org

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Hotel Moskva in Leningrad; Trip to Krasnodar.....	3
Krasnodar Studying Russian with the British.....	10
Novorossiysk on the Black Sea	31
Back to Krasnodar	39
Back to Moscow and My Time before My Group Arrives	43
Novgorod	59
Short Stay in Moscow before Meeting My Group in Leningrad	76
To Leningrad to Meet up with My Women’s Group.....	104
Baku, Azerbaijan.....	119
Tashkent.....	135
Irkutsk, Siberia.....	145
Back to Moscow	155
Conclusion	171
Pictures from Other Tours I Led	173

Pictures

My son Steven at party with women I met in Alma Ata in 1983, this was 1988 with new tour	173
Lady from my 1988 tour, posing with statues in Moscow ..	173
My son Steven about to sing, on 1988 tour	174
I and my 1988 tour.....	174
I and my whole group from first trip, tradeswomen	175
Girl performing at May Day gathering, first tour, tradeswomen, 1983	175
Boys' orchestra, Moscow, 1983, tradeswomen tour	176
Street scene in Ukraine	176
Peace poster	177
Peace poster	178
A tradeswoman, a friend from Alma Ata, and I on first trip	179
My daughter and other kids from first trip	179
Three tradeswomen from my first trip	180
Horses' act at circus in Moscow	180
Woman worker holding Women in Trades T-shirt we gave out in first Tradeswomen tour	181
Moscow gathering – World Peace for Children.....	182
Families at celebration in Moscow	182
Marching Band in Moscow Parade.....	183
Puppet Show, Kharkov Ukraine, next year's tour.....	183
Pioneer Choir, Kharkov Ukraine, next year's tour	184

Dinner in Kishinev, Moldavia, 1988 tour –	184
my son Steven at front left	
Guy from 1988 tour at Kishinev Moldavia,	185
Sacramento's Sister City	
Outdoor Cafe in Kishinev, Moldavia, 1988 tour	186

INTRODUCTION

As one of the pioneer 'Women in the Trades,' I was an electrician and union member with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), starting as an apprentice in 1979, and advancing to journeyman in 1983. At a Women in the Trades Conference in San Francisco, in 1983, I was chosen to co-lead a group of tradeswomen on a 'Citizen Diplomacy' visit to the U.S.S.R. to meet with our counterparts in that country for the sake of peace and friendship. Although my co-leader had to drop out at the last minute, I continued to follow through, and lead 23 tradeswomen and four of our children on this mission to the Soviet Union, for three weeks in spring of 1984. (23 adults plus myself was the least number I could bring, which allowed me to go free, so each time that's what I worked for, and succeeded.)

I found out that leading such tours can be quite complicated, especially when going to the Soviet Union, in the time of many different opinions about that country. Some of the women were "firm believers" in the Soviet system; some were just going to learn, and make connections with the Soviet tradeswomen; others came along to constantly cause trouble, and point out everything "bad" there, to thereby prove to the group, that, as we've all been told "America is best, and the Soviet Union is bad, and our enemy." Needless to say, my job seemed to be mainly to keep the peace among our own group.

Still, I felt it was a good trip, and we all learned a lot, and made our bid for peace between our peoples. I decided to continue leading tours there.

On my tour the following year, 1985, I decided to take two months off work, study the Russian language in Krasnodar, USSR, for the first month, spend ten days alone, visiting different contacts I had, and then meet up with my group of 23 women for the final three weeks.

I already spoke a Russian to an extent, since I had taken a minor in Russian Language in college, at California State University in Sacramento (CSUS), and also had had quite a bit of tutoring in the language. So I thought studying it in Krasnodar, would really be a great plan, especially if I intended to continue leading groups to the Soviet Union.

I decided to keep a daily diary of my experiences this time. The tour to study in Krasnodar had been set up by a British group, which I joined up with in Moscow. It was very inexpensive, only \$600, which included several train rides, all hotel link-ups, and food, and a month's stay at a pretty nice hotel in Krasnodar, where we had daily classes at the university there. I combined with that tour, my round trip ticket to Moscow, via Ireland, which was paid for along with the later tour, since I, as the tour leader got to go free. From my 1985 travel diary, then, covering our departure in late August to our last evening in late October of 1985, here's how it went.



A fellow electrician and I

HOTEL MOSKVA IN LENINGRAD; TRIP TO KRASNODAR

August 22nd-24th – I'm in Hotel Moskva in Leningrad, finally taking time to start this diary. What a time these last two days have been! Waiting two hours in New York's 'Port Authority' terminal for Kate (my travel agent) to bring me my overseas tickets and visa; taking a one and a half hour bus ride through New York City to Kennedy Airport; after arrival by Air Lingus in Ireland, waiting five hours for a connecting flight (Aeroflot) to Moscow; arriving with two other planes full of Cuban and Syrian delegations so therefore spending three and a half hours going through passport check and customs in Moscow airport; then spending two more hours getting to my hotel, transport for which I was given no voucher!

Luckily I had sat with an Irish guy on Aeroflot, who had a voucher for a tourist bus to Metropol Hotel. I talked to the people at the Intourist office in the airport and they finally agreed to let me ride on that bus to Metropol Hotel, where I could take a taxi for only 4 rubles to my hotel, Sevastopol. Otherwise a taxi ride to Sevastopol Hotel, which was situated the farthest away from the airport, would cost about 20 rubles. In fact it was about a half hour taxi ride just from Metropol to Sevastopol.

On the bus to Metropol I had had a long conversation with a young Intourist employee. He was a person who would defect to the U.S. in a minute if the opportunity arose. He was about twenty-five, dressed very western, handsome, and spoke excellent English. He began telling me how terrible life in the Soviet Union is. At first his complaints centered on the new "alcohol prohibition" that just started here, which he said, resulted in *no* clubs existing now where young people can meet.

No one wants to go out and dance when you can't drink, he said. He felt that life for young people was so boring, in contrast to America where he was sure life was very exciting and wonderful. He also said he had no freedom to dissent here, and in America he could speak his mind. I felt, however, he was speaking his mind right here in Moscow on a crowded bus, loud enough for many to hear.

But he continued to complain about the clothing and goods available here, and the long lines you must stand in to get anything worthwhile. I told him that I really didn't know what problems people have here, but that the U.S. has a lot of problems too and life is not so great as he thinks for many of us. Even the wealthy, I told him, are not free to walk safely at night.

He said, "Well here we can walk safely at night, but so what! How boring! Walking around at night, without clubs open except those that serve juice!"

"But what about the homeless? It's true you don't have them here, do you?"

"Big deal!" he laughed, "You call these little rooms homes?"

"Well, I saw some last year and though they were small, they were well furnished, warm, and seemed nice to me, especially for 10 rubles or so per month."

"Well, you ought to see the room I live in! One room, and I have to share the kitchen and bathroom with neighbors."

"Yeah, I've seen those here before, but you know, there are thousands of Americans who would be happy to live in one warm room rather than on the cold streets."

"Maybe so, but if I were in America, I know that would never happen to me!"

"Could be." I really didn't need this long negative

conversation after my long, hectic trip and so many hours without sleeping. “Well, I need to take a little nap, but it was nice talking to you!” I said.

“Yeah, good luck on your trip!”

“Thanks.”

I rested, but could not really sleep. And to make matters worse, at the Metropol hotel, there were two guys with a car who offered to drive me to the Sevastopol hotel. I saw it wasn't a taxi and they just didn't look on the level to me. I asked how much, and they said 20 rubles or 20 dollars. I said, “No thanks, that's too much.” They tried to argue with me, but I just took my luggage into the Metropol lobby and talked to the clerk. It was already one a.m., but the clerk called Sevastopol to be sure I had a room there and the doorman caught me a real taxi.

The driver didn't want to take me, because he was just off duty, but he finally agreed. I talked to him to try to get used to my Russian. He was a sweet guy with a wife and little girl. He thought it was good that Gorbachev was cracking down on alcohol use and just as we were talking about that, we saw a group of four drunk young men, staggering. One fell down, and the other three were trying to stand him up.

The taxi driver said, “See? That's what I mean.”

I finally got to Sevastopol, and paid 4 rubles for the ride. The bed was hard and the bathroom had cockroaches. In the morning, I met my roommates, who shared the bathroom, not the bedroom. They were two British guys about eighteen years old with heavy cockney accents. Graham and Dave were their names and they were really nice guys.

I found out we would not be going straight to Krasnodar as I had thought, but first to Leningrad by train for one day, and then a 44 hour train ride to Krasnodar on the 24th and 25th. This irritated me at first, because when I had signed up

for the Krasnodar Russian Language school, I took literally that we'd attend 3 hours a day, 6 days a week, and expected a full 24 days of classes. I had accustomed myself to the idea, but really there was no way I wanted to be depressed over anything on this trip, so I just relaxed and accepted the new schedule.

The train ride was eight hours long and great! I saw beautiful countryside and forest scenes, and villages along the way, some very picturesque. I saw women tending goats and cows. The weather was sunny and beautiful and many people were in their gardens, or sitting outside their farmhouses.

It's exciting meeting the different people on my language tour. Most are British, one woman is Italian, one German, and three, besides myself, are American. I got to talk to a number of them at breakfast and while riding along watching the scenery.

Also on the train were Soviet citizens, parents, and children. I was amazed at the patience of the Soviet children I saw. I heard no complaining at all! Only laughing, talking, playing, reading or working with the "Kubic Rubik" (Rubik's Cube), which seemed to be the latest most popular item.

A new friend, Cindy, and I walked the entire length of the train (about 15 cars), and this was the case with ALL the children we saw. Cindy and I were both amazed!

Another sight Americans would find interesting, was that we saw two men and two boys playing cards; in order to logistically reach the cards with the seating arrangement, one boy faced back over the seat ahead, one boy sat in the seat by the window, and the younger man sat on the older man's lap with his arm around him for balance! This arrangement seemed quite acceptable to those sharing the same car.

Our hotel room tonight is really nice (no cockroaches like last night). We overlook the Neva River and a bridge that

supposedly opens every night at 1:00 a.m. It's really a beautiful sight!

I tried to call Yuri, a contact from last year in Minsk to get the phone number for a Leningrad contact, Edward. Yuri and his wife Galya were out, so I will call tomorrow morning. I would rather visit Edward than go on the tour tomorrow, since my group will do that in October.

At dinner tonight there was a floor show and dancing. The music was mostly very western. The floor show was very sexist, with women in very scanty outfits, prancing around the macho men performers. I wondered if this was typical for places frequented by Soviet citizens, or only for "Westerners," who they may have assumed preferred such entertainment!

August 24th-26th – I got in touch with Yuri, but he had Edward's number at work on his desk, so I had to call "09," information. The operator had his number (he had moved), but she gave it to me too fast. I had to make her repeat so many times that she got quite irritated at me. I did finally get the number.

So I called Edward, and got his wife. He was on vacation, but she told me he'll be back in town when I get back to Leningrad in October. She didn't invite me over, and I didn't invite myself, because I'm still not comfortable speaking only Russian. If Edward, who speaks English, had been there, I'm sure we'd both feel better about the visit.

So I did tour the city. I saw all the sights, from outside anyway (no time for museums or art galleries today). I tried to use my Russian as much as possible. I spoke for a while with a Russian grandmother and her grandson who were near me on a bench while others were taking pictures. A man nearby noticed my accent and began talking to me. It turned out he was a chemist. He was very polite and asked me about America: where I lived; what brought me to Leningrad. I felt

no male chauvinistic attitude whatever from him (unlike an experience earlier on the train to Leningrad where I met drunk Russian men in smoking corridors, one of whom who grabbed at me and said, “Come here, American girl!”). I told the chemist about my previous trip in 1984, and my interest in helping to build people to people ties between our two countries.

After the tour, we left on the train to Krasnodar, which I’m on now. Boy what a long trip! And some of the young British students are quite rowdy. They partied until late the first night. One guy even broke windows on the train, with his head, of all things! Our group has gotten quite a bad name because of this impolite (to say the least) incident. It must be really hard for Russians to understand the contemptible attitudes of well-off foreign kids coming here.

I’m so impressed again by Russian kids. On the train ride we have seen so many Russian kids, down to babies. I have heard only laughter and singing and quiet talking from them. No complaining and fighting at all! It’s just amazing! They play together outside the berths, or sit and look out the windows, or read or play with little toys. This trip is extremely long and they just don’t seem to get bored, or at least don’t act it!

This ride is also very fascinating! We have passed by many, many small towns and villages, and some larger towns. We’ve passed through Tula (we didn’t see it, it was night); Kursk; Ryzhova; Prokhorovka; Kharkov; Kramatorsk; Konstantinovka; Gorlovka; Makeyevka (night), Rostov on the Don, Tikhoretsk, then finally Krasnodar. We had three meals a day in the restaurant car. I thought they were quite tasty!

While we rode we got to know the *dezhurnaya*, or I guess you would call her the “conductor.” She was the one who serves tea, and makes sure we’re all doing OK in our car. We were four to a room. There were two bunks, top and bottom, on

each side and a table between them by the window. I shared with Stanley, an older British man and Graham and Dave from my room in Moscow. The dezhurnaya sat with a bunch of us, crowded into a room and sang. I brought out the balalaika I had bought in Leningrad and played it and sang a couple of songs with her. She was great, and really a character!



Music Shop where I bought Balalaika in Leningrad

KRASNODAR STUDYING RUSSIAN WITH THE BRITISH

August 27th – We arrived in Krasnodar early and had breakfast. The food is great here! There is an abundance of fruits and vegetables, nice looking too! – an immense difference from last year in Moscow, and Leningrad, where it was almost impossible to find any good fruit.

I went walking all morning taking pictures of families, teen girls, and people selling and buying at the farmers' market, sights from the hotel. Almost everyone I asked agreed to let me take their picture.

This evening I talked for a while in Russian with the floor lady at our hotel. We were watching T.V. She was really a nice, open, older woman, with a kind face and easy smile. I told her I really want to speak and understand Russian because I want very much to speak with Soviet people and find out what they think about Americans, their country, and other things. I told her how in the USA it's said that Russian people hate their government and want to emigrate to the U.S. That really touched her off! She said a lot to me about that, of which I only understood some. She spoke of how things were before the revolution, and how could Americans believe such things if they haven't seen and spoken to the people themselves. Basically, she said it just isn't true.

We watched T.V. for about half an hour. It is so frustrating to me, that with all the Russian I've studied, I understand so little. Well, tomorrow school starts, maybe it will help.

August 28th – I don't think I'm going to learn much at this school. It's not run as I had thought. I don't understand the teacher at all in class. On breaks, on a one-to-one basis, I can understand some of what he says. He has sort of picked me out as someone to talk to on break. He speaks no English at all and really doesn't seem like a teacher. He lectures too

much and involves us in conversation too little.

We went on a city tour today and saw a movie about the Kuban area, which is what the Krasnodar area is called. The university we attend every morning is Kuban University. This town is really pretty, very green, and everywhere you see small stands where they sell fruit, juice, bread, posters, books, clothing, toys, and other things. Plus there are shops and supermarkets and small corner markets. There are lots of parlors serving juice, coffee, cocoa, tea, and sweets: ice cream, scones, cream puffs, and such. Apparently, now, no liquor is available in clubs or bars after 6:00 p.m., so people have to live with juice, etc. It will be interesting to see if this “prohibition” will last.

I went walking tonight down the main drag, Krasnaya Street. Many, many people are on the street late, even in parks where there’s hardly any light! People are sitting on benches way after dark here! I struck up a conversation with a woman, while walking down the street. She was very nice and we talked for about 20 minutes. I didn’t understand much of what she said, except that life is hard here, but much better than before the revolution. (That seemed like too-long-ago of a reference.) Her son, or someone in her family married an American woman, but I couldn’t understand much more. She wanted to know all about me and I told her what I could.

I watched T.V. until it went off at 12:00 a.m. I still can’t understand much, although I understand the news better than the films.

August 29th – Class was a little better today, but not much. I’d sort of like to transfer to the advanced class, because the teacher is supposed to be much better and most of the people in there are no more advanced than I. But I don’t want to hurt my teacher’s feelings. He still seems to pick me out to talk to at breaks. Today I understood almost all he said during break and also during class, but I think he’s speaking

with easier words now and slower. He says it seems to him I know Russian better than I think I do and that everyone has trouble understanding at first.

I went to the Kuban River today by tram. On the way a “funny” thing happened. I had given up my seat to an older woman and then someone got off, and I sat down again. Then this old man with a cane got on the bus. He had a really mad and mean look on his face. He seemed to be looking at me from the moment he got on, although I was sitting in about the middle of the car. As he approached me, he was saying something under his breath, and the woman beside me started talking to me. She kept motioning to me to get up! Apparently she was telling me to give him my seat because as he approached me he started yelling at me and tapped my foot with his cane. I got the message and jumped up and said, “Excuse me, sit down,” in Russian. He sat down and kept loudly admonishing me. During this time the woman, who had been gesturing to me to get up, and the woman I had given my seat to earlier started yelling at him and saying, “She doesn’t understand Russian, leave her alone!” But when I had said, “Excuse me, sit down” in Russian, that had convinced him that I did know Russian and I was just inconsiderate. At this point another woman joined in and was bawling him out, while one of them had turned to me and was asking me very kindly about myself: when I came here; where I was from; was I a student; and so on. In answering her, it became obvious to the other interested passengers that I was just a beginner, and a man nearby joined the women bawling out the old man! He and the women didn’t get off his case until his stop when he got off the tram!

The woman talking to me kept patting my back and shoulders and saying, “molodyets!” (it’s OK!) and other things to make sure I knew I was forgiven, or not being blamed, and actually appreciated for coming to their city for the sake of peace and friendship. She very nicely told me that

he's an old man and young people must give up their seats for them. So now I know! If you're young and/or strong you must keep a close eye on who gets on the bus or tram, and act quickly if it's an older man or woman, or, as I discovered later, if it's a woman with kids. Also I found out, as I gave up my seat a couple more times, that though it's expected, sometimes you have to insist, because the person will say no. But if you don't insist, people will think you're inconsiderate.

Well, anyway, I had a nice afternoon swimming and sunning at the beach. It's really beautiful, and many, many local people were there. There was an amusement park as well, with kids' rides, and a number of ice cream booths and soda dispensers. Also boats could be rented, very cheaply.

I spent the evening watching T.V. It's getting easier to understand!

August 30th – What a day today was! I switched classes and my new teacher in the advanced class is much easier to understand than the other one. She gave us assignments which I finished. I really feel I will learn with her.

But most exciting was this evening! We went on a boat trip where we were told there would be disco dancing and we would meet students. It turned out others could get tickets for this ride as well, and workers at the oil establishment got free tickets from their trade union for this disco dance boat trip.

One of the oil workers and his girlfriend, who is an electrical engineer, found Cindy and me in line for soda. We started talking (as much as we could in Russian, since they spoke no English). We sat together and talked for a long time. (I did my best to translate for Cindy). They were Alexander, Irena, and Svyeda. Alex was a real joker, and kept kidding around. The only thing he could say in English was "smile if you have had sex today," which he said a number of times this evening. But he was really nice and sang German songs. We

women sang Russian songs. Later we danced. They invited us to Irena's tomorrow night. It turns out that Pasha, a nineteen year old student of language, will be there to translate. It ought to be fun.

August 31st – Class today was still quite difficult, but I did OK in my presentation, and she didn't ask for the papers. I suppose that will wait until Monday. I stayed in all day napping and studying Russian. This evening Svyeda, Irena, Pasha and his friend Sergei met Cindy and me out in front of our hotel, and accompanied us by streetcar to Irena's house. Public transportation in Krasnodar costs three kopeks (about a nickel). And, oh yes, Svyeda's six year old daughter, Anya came also. What a cutie! a little pianist from the music school.

Svyeda and Irena attend night school together and have known each other for a long time. They both belong to a mushroom gathering group and go on excursions for mushrooms a lot this time of year. I would say they are both around 30 years old.

Irena had a snack ready for us of bread, salami, cake, candy and vermouth. Cindy brought Champaign and cashews. They asked lots of questions about the safety of the streets at night in the U.S., and the race problem. They are very concerned about the future and nuclear war. Irena spoke of that fear making her put off getting married and having children.

She played Ella Pugachova records for us. (She's a really famous singer here.) Also we saw a very nice lightning show from her veranda. It was an unusual sight, they said. It was too far away to hear thunder, but lightning danced around the sky all evening, almost as if it was planned to entertain her American guests!

Her apartment was small, but nice, with hardwood floors. She had a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. She didn't have much furniture, but in the living room, she had

two large, beautiful mahogany hutches with glass doors. Lots of dishes, crystal, and decorative utensils were displayed in it. We enjoyed the evening so much and plan to go mushrooming with them sometime next week, if it rains. It must rain first.

September 1st – We went to a collective farm in Pavlovskaya, a town not far from Krasnodar, today. It was called “Soviet Russia.” It’s very interesting how a whole community is developed around these farming areas. The homes there were all privately owned, and really nice ones. There was a large school and this being the first day of school the kids were dressed in their formal school dress and all carried flowers. However, since it’s Sunday, no classes were held, just a welcoming ceremony and then the kids played.

They provide all kinds of cultural activity here to encourage people to stay in the community. They provide scholarships to the university for those who will stay and specialize in farming, machinery maintenance, teaching, or other jobs with the community.

If someone wants to leave, they go it alone.

The school there seems to have a very high academic level and starting at fourth grade, special math courses begin and continue through calculus in the tenth grade.

We were told that boys there often go into mechanics and girls into teaching and medical professions right there at the farm. One of our group asked if girls could go into farm machinery mechanics if they want to. The main guide, blushed, and said, “Well, yes, we have ten women mechanics here also.”

It’s a common story, I heard over and over in my tradeswomen tour of last year, as well, that women are doing mechanics, construction and other typically ‘male’ trades, but that many men and women alike are ashamed of this and feel that women should not have to do such hard work – “It hurts

their reproductive organs,” is usually the reason given for opposing such work for women.

We were also given a performance by a large group of local people, adults and children. About 70 people performed. They were very competent, all in costume, as they sang and danced! The performance was given in a large auditorium there. The theme was that people of all cultures should be friends. Byelorussian dances, Ukrainian dances, Russian dances, Central Asian dances, and others were shown. All wore native dress, and at the end all danced together. At one of the performances about Peace, they all played instruments.

We saw their camping and rest area on a river. There was boating, swimming and an amusement park for children.

These people did not seem at all like poor farm workers; they dressed like in cities, looked well-fed, happy and healthy.

We were fed a feast, wished well, given gifts, and left for Krasnodar.



Performance about peace shown to us in Krasnodar

September 2nd – Today was not eventful. At school I was given an assignment to read and be ready to speak about an article from the *Literary Gazette*. So all day I worked on that assignment, looking up words, trying to understand the article, writing my synopsis. I didn't have time for anything else.

The article, however, as I finally understood it, was very informative. It was called 'Maltsyev from Maltsyev.' The article explained that no one really knew if the family was named after the town or vice-versa. Anyway, Maltsyev was a ninety year old man from the town of Maltsyev, in the Urals, who had dedicated his life to agriculture and is widely known in the Soviet Union as a man who tried to retain agricultural methods that respect the earth and the people, but yet allow new methods so as to maximize crop growth in order to meet the food needs of the people.

He is against herbicides and pesticides and teaches that there are ways we can learn from historical methods of planting to avoid the need for such dangerous chemicals. He still teaches farmers and meets with children as well.

It was a very long article, however, and I'm sure I was only able to get the bare outline of the real essence of Maltsyev's teachings and philosophy. I did get a pretty good paper ready, I think, and I'm prepared to report on it tomorrow.

September 3rd – I did fairly well in school today. It's funny, one day I seem to understand everything and the next day all is blank again with me. Today was one of the better ones. After school, most of the day, I studied vocabulary. I moved my mattress out on the balcony where it was a little cooler. The weather has been so hot here, and so humid!

What an exciting evening I had! Pasha came over and took Cindy and me with him and his friend Sergei to Pasha's sister's apartment. His sister and baby were out of town but

his brother-in-law, Andre, entertained us. He served us cake, a liqueur called 'Disco' (which tastes like Drambuie), coffee and tea. Then we talked politics all evening. Andre had lots of questions about the U.S. that really got Cindy going!

"Why can't everyone in the U.S. have a job?" he questioned.

"Well, maybe many don't, but those who do have a higher standard of living than here, and thousands of people are trying to cross our borders every day because of our standard of living!" Cindy was really heated!

"Maybe so, but why can't the U.S. agree to disarmament? I know one big reason is that some rich Americans are profiting too much from the arms race!"

I basically stayed out of the argument, mainly because I didn't want Cindy to be mad at me. But truly, I know many people, even in my own family, who make minimum wage, or are on welfare, and just scraping by. Plus I see homeless on the streets of Sacramento every day! Cindy is wealthy, though, and like those Americans who are doing fine, can't believe than anyone who wants to, can't live great in the USA.

Andre laughed when I invited him and his family to visit me in the U.S. He said it takes three years or more for that process to take place. He also explained that while he thinks in the U.S. there are many goods but few have money to buy them, it's frustrating in the USSR because people have money to spare but the goods aren't available!

He, like others I've met here, had that look of honesty on his face; he seemed to have the purest of intentions and really believed in the ideals of his country.

"If people were dissatisfied here," he said, "and generally felt the government was in the wrong, they would definitely have massive protests. But except for very few, the masses are

in agreement with the government.”

It was a very interesting evening. His apartment was nice. He had a stereo and played American rock and roll tapes all evening. He had a bedroom, front room, bathroom, kitchen, hall, balcony, nice furniture, and a hutch with glass displaying crystal, plates, decorative cups and such.

September 4th – This morning before classes, Pasha and Sergei showed Cindy and me an Orthodox church. Outside were about four old women begging. That’s the first time I’ve seen that here. Pasha said they were on small pensions. I’ve heard from others that they donate this money to the church.

I felt frustrated at school today. I had a very hard time expressing myself or understanding questions directed at me. It seems I can understand what’s going on in class, but freeze up when questions are directed at me. It was most frustrating because we discussed Gorbachev’s answers to the interview in *Time* magazine, centering on his decision to freeze all nuclear weapons testing until January 1986, and his offer to continue the freeze indefinitely if the U.S. joins in.

It became obvious that the two best Russian speakers in class believed the West’s pat answers 100%. The Russians can’t be trusted. What about Afghanistan? Etc., etc. I kept trying to express that trust is not necessary because we can totally check on each other. But these guys were way more vocal with their cynical point of view.

The rest of the day I spent studying, studying, studying. I skipped dinner. I watched T.V. this evening. I talked to the ‘dezhurnaya.’ She wanted to buy my plastic digital watch for her daughter. I had to refuse. I have a feeling I’m going to give it away as some point, but for now it’s all I have, and I need it.

The ‘dezhurnaya’ had something she just had to tell me, though. She said, “We eat, we are clothed, we have shelter, all

we need is world peace, that's enough!"

September 5th – School is still frustrating. I like the singing, though! We sing every Monday and Thursday. Our music teacher, Zhenia, is a young man, about twenty-three years old. He plays excellent accordion and is teaching us songs of the area, mostly Cossack songs. Some are variations of Russian in sort of a local dialect. We really have fun in music class. He's also helping us a lot in our pronunciation.

I went to a movie tonight at the 'Avrora' movie theater with Pasha, Cindy and Sergei. The movie was "Raspberry Wine," a detective movie. Movie theaters are so different here. Instead of snack bars they have buffets. One floor has a large café where families come to eat before the movie. Also movies are so inexpensive – 40 to 70 kopeks – and the food is inexpensive too. Pasha says this is one of the nicest theaters, but others are not too different in what is provided. The food was mostly cold cuts and breads, salads and soups, and there was a fountain with soda, juice, ice cream, and pastries like cream puffs and scones. For 2 rubles and 50 kopeks you get food, drink, and dessert.

Before the movie started they had a short film on alcoholism, where workers and families were interviewed. It had some parts where many in the audience laughed. But after a couple of these bursts of laughter only one person kept laughing. He was sitting next to me! Finally the woman in front of him had enough! She turned around and bawled him out royally, saying it was serious business!! He cussed back at her, and after a few minutes he left the theater.

The movie was a mystery. It was in full beautiful color, with forest scenes, and all-in-all an artistically well done movie. On a very shallow level it wasn't too hard to follow, but we had Pasha explain details to us after the show.

We walked home through the park. The park by the

theater, or in which the theater is located, is simply beautiful. It's like a green belt, in a way, spanning ten or so blocks. Flowers were blooming everywhere, and it had beautiful shrubs and trees. Benches were everywhere with people sitting on them. And lots of lovers kissing there that evening. They have underpasses at the busiest streets adjoining the park, so pedestrians can go below and emerge in the park without dodging traffic.

September 6th – I sat with Elena (my teacher) today on the bus going to school. She insisted on finding out all about my day yesterday. She wanted to know about the movie, the entire plot! Boy was that difficult! But she was very patient. It helps me a lot with my Russian when people insist I use it. I managed to tell her about the movie to her satisfaction. In class I gave a pretty good report and felt much better about my progress today. My teacher has agreed to correct papers I write, trying to clarify my thoughts on different subjects in Russian. I spent the whole rest of the day writing my ideas on the differences between life in the USSR and in the US, as I see it so far.

September 7th – Elena took my paper and is correcting it. She also handed back the paper report I had written on my hobby yesterday. This is going to be great. I think I will probably learn a lot more here than I had thought.

We saw an interesting film strip today about different types of individuals. It was a film that would be shown normally to first through fourth grade students, I would say. We had to discuss it in Russian, of course. It was about two boys Pyoter and Yuri. Pyoter was neat and clean and always on time. He studied hard, learned well, and got good grades.

Yuri, on the other hand, was sloppy, disorderly, didn't even care what time it was. He played too long to get to school on time, watched T.V. instead of doing homework, got bad grades, etc. Up to that point the film seemed your usual

propaganda film, to make children shape up and pattern themselves after Pyoter.

But then another side of the two was shown. Yuri helped his mother dry dishes, while Pyoter sat smugly by, reading. Yuri protected younger children at school who were being bullied by older ones, while Pyoter ran off to avoid confrontation; Yuri helped cultivate the school garden, while Pyoter walked by with his nose in the air, obviously going to study.

The message I thought was really a unique one. To really make kids think about right and wrong, good and bad behavior, from different points of view, and maybe help them be more well-rounded and open minded individuals. Of course our reason to watch it was to discuss it in Russian, an easy task for a first to fourth grade Soviet child, but pretty difficult for most of us.

I went to a hospital today to visit Graham, who is really sick with inflammation of the colon and a stomach ailment. The hospital is made up of a series of brick buildings. They are quite old and not modernized at all. They seemed clean and bright, but like something you'd expect in a small mountain area in the U.S. His heart had been palpitating so they checked it with a cardiogram. His results were negative – very strong heart. He's having trouble eating. They gave him medication and the first day he had intravenous 'drip.' His hospitalization, of course, was free, as all medical care is for tourists as well as Soviet citizens.

I went to the farmers' market right behind our hotel. It's huge and operates all day, every day. They sell beautiful grapes, watermelons, berries, plums, apples, peaches, pears, plus the usual potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes and cucumbers, and lots of other vegetables. It's really too bad the northern cities like Moscow and Leningrad can't get very much fruit. From all I hear, and my experience as well, they rarely get good fruit other

than apples, pears, and sometimes grapes up north.

I bought a kilo of raspberries for one ruble. They were delicious and I ate them and listened to the radio the rest of the day.

September 8th – Today I went to a park to study in the morning. The main street is closed off to motor traffic here on Sundays, and the streets are full of people. There seems to be plenty of food and goods everywhere. Tables and stalls line the streets and people crowd around to buy. It's like an ongoing street fair.

In the afternoon I walked around and took pictures. Two young men said, "Take our picture for *Crocodile*" (a Russian magazine). I laughed and asked if I could take one just for me. One of them wanted to talk to me about America. Of all the things he could have been interested in asking, his question was about alcohol! "Can you buy alcohol any time of day?" It seemed to him that would be heaven!

I got a picture of a woman and her two children. Her little girl was digging in the sand pile by the sidewalk and didn't want to look at me for the picture. Her mother kept saying, "Look, Anya, smile! Turn around!" But the child was just too shy so I got the mother and son and the back of the daughter's head.

I also got pictures of the neighborhoods here: the green belts lining the sidewalks where residents plant flowers, vegetables and such; and the houses and yards, not too fancy, but sort of like working-class neighborhoods in small towns in the U.S. I've seen.

September 9th – We went to the Agricultural Institute today. It's huge, very modern, and beautiful. We had a discussion on ecology. They certainly talk like they're very interested in completely eradicating the need to use pesticides or herbicides.

We played volleyball with young women college students. They beat us so soundly two games that they offered to intermingle with us to make the games more fun. So they divided in two, and half of us went with either side. Then we had two more games with closer scores! One really sweet thing they did was to arrange a rooting team for us as well as for them. So before we mixed teams, when they scored one group would cheer, and when we scored another group would cheer for us, to make us feel welcome! We had a lot of fun and good exercise there.

Tonight Cindy, Immacolata, an Italian student, and I went with Sergei and Pasha to meet Sergei's mother. She had a feast prepared for us and was a very interesting woman. She is a teacher of French and heads the Department of Scientific Atheism at Kuban University. Her position in that department really interested Cindy, a student of Theology. Cindy asked how she came to be in that position. Her answer, translated by Pasha, was "it's my burden."

This really got Cindy curious, especially with the further explanation that teachers at Kuban University teach their regular subject but in addition are often times assigned another duty such as heading different departments, purely as administrators. To Cindy it seemed only logical that this woman was "forced" to head the Department of Atheism, as if no one would do such a thing if not forced. I told her I felt this probably is not too different from the U.S., where I had experienced teachers in my high school whose specialty was Physical Ed. or Language, and they were forced to teach Math or something else as well. Besides, it seemed to me that, like Pasha and Sergei, as well as Alexander and Irena (of the boat ride) Sergei's mother, was, in fact, an Atheist.

Cindy just could not accept this. She really liked these people, but couldn't understand how people could be kind and caring, and be Atheists!

Cindy, Immacolata, and I had a very exciting taxi ride home. Taxi drivers here seem to think they are paid not by the distance travelled, but by how fast they get you to your destination. Perhaps there is a logic to it, but no words would slow him down. Pasha had prepaid the driver, but we didn't know it. We tried to pay him again but he refused to take our money! He said he'd already been paid. I have a hard time understanding such honesty!

Paula called me tonight! She's an American living in Moscow, whom I met on my tour last year. She'll be expecting to hear from me as soon as I get to Moscow. Her boyfriend, George, will be in Krasnodar on Monday, and will look me up. This is George's home town, so I guess I'll get to meet his family and friends. That ought to be fun! Unfortunately he speaks such good English that he'll insist on translating everything, and if a translator is anywhere near, I get really spoiled and use little Russian. I can hardly wait though. I think it will be fun to visit lots of local people.

September 10th – School was much better today. I understood just about everything. I studied all day long today, just writing, writing, more writing, and translating. Some of our group went to a Pioneer Palace today. I didn't, because I've seen four or more of them. I skipped dinner again today. I really like the food here, but we're given too much! About half of us are eating vegetarian, so there's a special vegetarian table for us. For breakfast we have cheese, black or white bread, butter (always unsalted), kefir, eggs or crepes, juice and coffee. For lunch, a five or so course meal! It includes bread, cheese, butter, salad (usually coleslaw), tomatoes, peppers, grapes, watermelon. Then soup. Then the main dish of eggplant, different types of fish, or potato casseroles. Then we usually have ice cream and tea, different types of meringue cookies or cream puffs. For me breakfast and lunch are usually enough. Dinner is only soup, vegetables and bread and butter, with dessert of cookies, scones, or ice cream, but I normally don't

show up for dinner.

September 11th – Today I got a terrible headache! I think it's from so much listening and trying to understand Russian, and trying to speak it and say things right. After a couple of aspirin and a nap I just had to get out and look around some more.

I find this town so fascinating to look at as I ride back and forth in busses. I never fail to see at least one horse-drawn cart going right down the road in traffic. There are lots of small quaint little houses and shacks with some nice and some rundown fences and gates around them. The houses all seem to have gardens around them, and it's common also to see a garden planted in the green belt area among the trees lining the sidewalk. Some of these are flower gardens, some vegetables and flowers mixed. All this is not in an isolated area, but intermingled among the buildings.

On the main street, Krasnaya, where you see office buildings, libraries, department stores, and such, you also see arches, ever so often through which you can see courtyards lined with small houses, mostly like shacks. In the courtyards are often jungle-gym type equipment or swings for children, whom you see playing around in these areas on tricycles, toy cars, or on the equipment. So you really see the contrast here between the old and modern. It's as if you intermingled my older, small community of Broderick, in with the modern center of downtown Sacramento right across the river. You also see apartment buildings here, but none over six stories tall.

I've come across a couple of cases of racial tension and outright racism here. One night Vivian, our group leader, and several others were out walking when they saw what they feared would turn into a fight. Two Africans, probably students, were yelling at two white men in a 2nd floor apartment, "you Russian monkeys" and other insults. The Russians were yelling racial insults back.

Also, a few nights ago, a Black man stole one of the British women's purse. They didn't know who he was but he had been seen taking it. So the bar at which it was stolen closed its doors to ALL Angolans! I'm not sure what the deal is, if the Africans hanging out there were students, tourists, or what, since it's a hard currency bar, but now if you're Black, you cannot enter that bar.

September 12th – Today after class we visited an electronic apparatus factory. It was interesting to see all the meters: volt, amp, watt, gauges, scopes, etc. that they manufactured there. Also we got to interview a woman, Tatyana, who is on the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation and was a worker at that plant. It was interesting to hear how she got into office. It caused quite a discussion among our group.

She said she started out as a shop steward in her section and then was recommended as an area union representative because she won grievances and was seen as a serious worker for people's rights. Then others recommended her for city representative of some sort. At each level she was voted on but, the way she explained it, there would be meetings held where large groups of people would discuss which person should be recommended for each higher office. The "best" person was decided there at these meetings, and then that person's name alone would appear on the final ballot, where 95% or more of the people voted for her, or simply affirmed the choice of the smaller meetings.

In that way she eventually was chosen as a delegate to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. She said she thought this was a very democratic way, because if she hadn't proven herself every step of the way she wouldn't have been chosen to run, and if the populace felt the body who chose her was wrong, they could have voted against her. Also, she said, she could be voted out at any time if it was felt she wasn't

doing her job.

Some in our group felt that you just can't call it democracy if two parties aren't running, or at least two people aren't running against each other. Others were arguing, Why not? Sometimes it isn't democratic in the West when two wealthy people that nobody knows are made popular by advertisements and then the populace gets to choose between them!

We asked her what the people in her region did when they had complaints. Did they write to her? She said she got phone calls and letters all the time from her constituency and that the largest complaint was housing. Many people in smaller places wanted larger. Some, still doubled up wanted their own apartments. She said building was going on everywhere, which we have all seen, but that her role in the housing issue was to try to make sure families get first choices and that apartments are given fairly.

Tonight was great! Pasha, Irena, and Andre Andrei came to take Cindy and me around town. We walked and talked all evening. I spoke only Russian and understood most of what they said. Pasha spent his time with Cindy. Irina and I walked arm in arm everywhere. She gave me a book, "Fate of Man," that's supposed to be excellent. She also gave me calendars and badges. She and Andre Andrei walked me around the park and showed me carved wooden animals and taught me the names in Russian of those I didn't know.

I told them that I feel just like a child learning how to talk, and I hope I don't seem like I'm not too bright. They laughed, and Irina said she can't speak any English, so I shouldn't feel bad. The park is really nice, full of blooming flowers, shrubs and trees, and a pond with swans in it. They laughed when I called it a lake, and taught me the word for pond.

There's an area in the park set aside for dancing and

hundreds of teens were dancing there, to their type of blaring rock and roll. We saw three militia men sitting nearby on a park bench in case of trouble. But it didn't seem that possibility would arise.

We also went up on a hill where there's a gazebo where you can see beautiful views of the park. Irena told me that when she graduated from high school, she and her friends had an all-night party there. They walked around all night, she said, and then watched the sun rise from the gazebo in the morning. I can't imagine parents allowing that around here, but she said the parents didn't know.

They have lots of children's play equipment here as well: merry-go-rounds, jungle-gyms and motorized rides also. I asked Irena if this park was a popular place for kids. She said, "Of course, they love it." There were also boat rides on the pond. I found out later that in the center where the music was, there is also a favorite restaurant of many Krasnodarians. The park is quite dark, and as usual, lovers were everywhere on the benches kissing.

On the way home, I asked Andrei about the large billboards everywhere with political slogans on them. What do people think of them? Do they object, or do they like them? He told me he thinks people like them. He likes them. He said that people know we need to always be keeping friendship and solidarity with other countries in our minds for the sake of keeping peace. Also people like to feel confidence in what accomplishments are being made by the country and the party.

I said, I know people in America would probably hate such posters, but we have billboards everywhere advertising commodities and people don't like them, but there they are anyway.

We arrived back at the hotel late, but what a time we had.

I'll never forget this wonderful evening!

September 13th – Today I took lots of pictures and spoke a lot of Russian to the other teachers at the school. I gave gifts of Polaroid pictures. I know if I could take only another month's worth of classes here I would be able to do quite well speaking and understanding Russian. But we are going to Novorossiysk, on the Black Sea, this weekend, and Monday will be our last day of class.

I finally got to talk to the other Elena, a teacher of the beginning classes, whom I've wanted to meet. She has such a kind face and warm friendly eyes. I told her that I'd been wanting to talk to her and that I'd heard she was a good teacher, and seemed like a nice person to me. She told me that she is going tomorrow with us to Novorossiysk, and will sit with me on the bus and we'll talk!

I'm so glad! But, I told her it will be difficult because my Russian is still limited and there's so much I'd like to ask her about: her feelings about life, her country, and so forth. But she said that somehow we'll manage. I'm really looking forward to tomorrow!

NOVOROSIYSK ON THE BLACK SEA

September 14th – What an exciting day this was! Elena and I sat together and talked about my family, hers, Krasnodar, my home (Broderick and Bryte), peace and so on, but when we started talking about the school system she started speaking English. I didn't know she could. She said she wanted to make it easier for me, because this was a subject she was very interested in and wanted to make sure I could really express myself.

So we spoke English for most of the rest of the ride. She said her oldest daughter just started school and she was somewhat concerned that their schools were too regimented. She did not like children wearing uniforms and felt that maybe individuality was being stifled in other ways besides. She said that the teachers wanted well-rounded students who got "A's" in all subjects, and many do in primary grades, but she feels that such expectations may hold back a child who perhaps may have special abilities in one field and force them to be average in everything rather than bring out that one talent.

She also felt the strictness could hurt some children. Like for instance, there are some "bad" children who disrupt class. Very few disrupt, she said, but these children are watched very carefully. She said they usually come from homes where there is alcoholism, or a single parent who can't cope with children. The names of these children are given to a particular branch of the militia made up of women. They provide extra services for these children and make sure they are getting the advantages they need, like summer camps such as nearby Artek, on the Black Sea, and other activities. They provide extra money for the family, if that is discovered to be the problem, and so forth.

She felt this system could possibly be unfair to some kids

who are just naturally comedians and pranksters, and could stifle their creativity.

I told her that if their schools were going overboard one way, it seemed ours were going overboard the other way, and that in my experience, our schools, after third grade, started going downhill fast. The one or two “problem” children she spoke of per class, became one third or more children in classes I’ve experienced. It’s hard at that point to know if it’s the teacher’s or the child’s fault. The teacher is faced with many disruptions, so she or he tries to keep control by somehow punishing the disrupters. It’s hard for me to analyze, but the results are that in our schools many kids stop learning academically at that time, and start being moved ahead year by year without advancing their knowledge.

I told Elena that if there had to be a choice between one extreme or the other, it seems better to me to ‘force’ kids to get a good, well-rounded education at least until eighth or ninth grade and then let them specialize, since at least then they’ll have the tools to make the choice: ability to read and write, do math, etc. So no matter what their specialty they can both carry it out better and be better citizens because they know about the world around them. Our problem, I said, seems to be that so many people are functionally illiterate. They know only what they watch on T.V., and hear on radio, which is not normally in-depth reporting, and those I’m speaking of would not be interested in any in-depth reporting, anyway.

We both agreed that if there was an end to the arms race both our education systems would benefit. An additional question I had for her was the nature of primary grade teachers in Krasnodar, if it was possible to generalize. She said she thought they were chosen for their kindness and “grandmother” like qualities. They are very gentle and love the children.

She said that her daughter has been going to school for only two weeks and already loves her two teachers (one regular teacher and one after-school teacher since her mother works). “She doesn’t want to come home!” Elena laughed.

I asked if her daughter also goes to a Pioneer Palace. She said, “No, they are for older children; she goes to the local club. It costs 5 rubles a month, and she takes sewing and gymnastics there. These are subjects she picked herself.”

I asked Elena what people feel about socialism here. Are they cynical? Do they think it’s working? Do they envy the West and want more products?

She said that she would first have to speak for herself. She said she didn’t want more. In fact she thought people needed a lot less, and that she would always say to herself, “Do I really need this or can I do without it? How I can have fewer things is important to me. But,” she said, “I am more settled than the young people, especially the young students seventeen to around twenty-five.”

She said that she thinks the young people want more “intellectual” freedom and more personal belongings. They are the ones who always want Western blue jeans and among this group are most of those who go to the U.S. She said that if there was peace, she thinks there would be freer travel also, and they could go see for themselves if the grass is really so much greener. She thinks most would come back. She said that once people start working, whether younger or after college, and get settled down, they are much more patriotic. She thinks that those who actually oppose the system are very few.

I asked her about discrimination in education and employment. She said immediately, “No, that doesn’t exist here.” Then she said, “Well, yes it does sometimes. There are places where, for example, Uzbek people are not employed and it is felt they should be. So perhaps Uzbek people who

may not be as well qualified will get the job instead of a Russian, who is perhaps more qualified.”

I told her that this is not called discrimination in the U.S., but “affirmative action.” I asked her if the Uzbeks who are hired and do happen to be unqualified are given special training to help them qualify. She said, “Yes, but this sometimes is a problem because there are those individuals who say, “Oh, well, I’m needed for their ‘quota’ so I won’t bother to work hard or really learn this job. I’m doing O.K., I’ll just relax, etc.”

I asked about equal opportunity for women and she said, “Well, I just went to the first day of school with my daughter and all of us mothers had to sign in and tell our occupations, and our husbands’ occupations, and most of the mothers had better educations and better jobs than the fathers!” She told me she had heard this for years, but it was the first actual proof she had seen. The mothers, she said, were mostly engineers, managers, architects and so on, and the fathers were mostly laborers. She said that her sister is an electrician and used to work like me, with tools and overalls on. She worked in a power house on the generators, but now is in management, and her husband is a worker there. She told me she knows several women in situations like that.

Then we arrived in Novorossiysk. Elena had to leave us, since she was visiting relatives in the area. We had a nice lunch in a beautiful, “wood carved,” restaurant. It looked sort of like a gingerbread house, and was on the outskirts of the city in a forest.

The city of Novorossiysk is situated on a sort of horseshoe bay. On one side you see all the cement factories and the rocky hills which have been scraped and scraped for the ingredients they use for Portland cement. On the inlet are ships in port, grain elevators and such. On the other side are beaches, not really nice, but O.K., with benches to lie on in

the sun. To lie on the benches costs 20 kopeks per day.

They had told us in Krasnodar that even if the weather was cool, the sea was warm, 30° Celsius – C (86° Fahrenheit – F)! Well, that was not true! It was only 18.7° C (about 66° F), quite cold! I met a woman who was already in the water, from Kharkov, visiting her son here. She and a number of other older women in the water kept teasing me, and telling me to stop wading and just jump in. They kept laughing at me and saying, "The water's fine! You'll get used to it. It's warm!"

Well, I did finally jump in. And no, it wasn't warm, but I swam around for a while anyway, until I felt too numb, and got out and lay in the sun for about an hour. It was nice and warm there on the bench, and the clouds drifting by cooled it off enough that I didn't get sunburned. Just the thought that I was really here at the Black Sea, and had actually swum in it, was so exciting!

This afternoon Cindy, Vivian (our group leader), and I had coffee together and talked. It was very interesting to hear Vivian's points of view. She's British and had started to study French and German for her Master's program, but changed to Russian because it seemed so exotic. She did her thesis on post-revolutionary literature between 1917 and 1925. She also has really studied Russian History and the Stalin era in particular. Cindy, whose entire view of Stalin is from Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago, asked what Vivian thought of Stalin. Vivian recommended a couple of books and gave her opinion, that Stalin was a really necessary person in many ways for the Soviet Union at that time. She thinks Solzhenitsyn misrepresents and exaggerates his excesses; however, obviously there were many. She spoke of the need for and fulfillment of electrification and massive construction of the country under his leadership. Also she felt he was very necessary to oppose the followers of Trotsky who felt world revolution should be first on the agenda, while Stalin said, no,

first there must be the building of the Soviet Union, electrically, economically, and scientifically, moving it into the 20th century, so the model would be there for the world to follow, and also would allow them to fight fascism if and when they had to. Needless to say, Cindy wasn't buying it, that there was anything positive to be said about Stalin. But at least the conversation stayed on a calm and respectful level.

We also talked about literature, and Cindy wanted to know if Dostoevsky was still banned here and why he had been. Vivian said that for one thing, she thinks they are very concerned here how children grow up. She said, "Don't you think really a book such as 'Crime and Punishment' could have a terrible effect on a youth who hadn't established his ethics?" They do allow it now, she told us, but they are always trying to keep in mind which influences are really bad for the developing minds, such as pornography and such.

Then at dinner there was a dance – a live band. What an exciting evening! There were actually three wedding parties taking place in this very huge dining room. One of the parties was for a Greek couple. I'm not sure of the others, but the wedding party nearest our table were Russians. This town has a lot of different nationalities, like Greeks, Yugoslavs, Armenians and others. The music was basically Rock, Folk and Folk Rock. They played Greek music, Yugoslav music, Gypsy music, Armenian music, and also Russian (Pugachova songs, mostly), and American and British Rock music.

To me it seemed so strange to see this Russian wedding party, with the usual older people in attendance, getting up to dance to American Rock and Roll. Kids, I could understand, but all these babushkas pulling the grandpas out to dance was quite a sight. Most of the older guys refused, but the grandmas danced every dance, and some grandpas joined in.

I danced a lot also, and a couple of Russian boys latched on to me, especially one particular one, who finally decided to

leave me alone when he found out he was my son's age. That was sort of a funny situation, which just goes to show the confusion that can happen when you're trying to learn a foreign language. When I was saying goodbye and thanking him for the dances, I was trying to say, "I wish you well, health, success, etc." as is a common and polite Russian farewell, but I made a grammatical error in which I said, "I desire *you*," instead of "I desire (or wish) *for* you... success etc." Before I could get out the success part, he started getting all happy again, and his buddies started patting him on the back, and laughing. I said, "no, no, I meant *for* you, *for* you, success, happiness...". He finally got the message and left. Sometimes a small language mistake can really get you in trouble!

September 15th – I got out to the beach as early as possible, about 10:30. It was cloudy on the way there but cleared up by the time I lay down on my 20 kopek bench. But after about 45 minutes, clouds covered the sun completely. Vivian and some others of my group found me and kept talking about going in for a swim. At that point it seemed much too cold. We went out onto the pier and once again several older women splashing around in the sea laughed at us and kept saying, "Come in! Come in! It's warm!" So we jumped in. My God! It took my breath away. It was even colder than yesterday! The babushkas said, "Swim! Swim! You'll get used to it!"

We did, for a while, and actually I felt pretty good. The water was about 17° C (62° F), but even though we felt pretty cold, we were afraid to get out in this overcast day. But the air was considerably warmer than the water and there was no breeze, so when we got out we were not cold, and just felt refreshed! Some little boys nearby, after watching us, got encouraged to dive in. But they didn't take the time needed to get used to the water, and jumped right out. They stood there blue and shivering as we climbed out feeling fine.

We went for coffee, and I had a nice talk with Vivian, and Galya, our guide. We discussed the British students, and their reaction to this trip. Some are really thinking and opening their minds, while others are not affected at all except negatively. Some can only complain: The hotels are no good! The service is terrible! Etc. Etc. But it seems these students are the rich ones who are used to first class service, even at home.

On the way back to Krasnodar we went by a winery. The area was not dissimilar to our Napa Valley wine country. Most went for wine tasting. In the U.S. wine and cheese is the custom. Here – wine and chocolate!

I skipped the wine tasting, and instead looked at the nearby lake and talked to a couple of workmen on the grounds there. I took their pictures and got their addresses to send them a copy of the photos later. They were Sergei and Victor from Novorossiysk. I talked to two working women nearby, but they said, “No pictures!” They told me they felt too poorly dressed.



Workers outside wine tasting at Novorossiysk,
who gave me seed snacks.

BACK TO KRASNODAR

Upon arriving at our hotel in Krasnodar, I found out that George had called me. Paula's friend, George, is here in Krasnodar now! He called back at 10:30 and arranged to meet me after school tomorrow. His sister's house is right by the university.

September 16th – I finished class. I gave Elena a final composition. She will correct it and return it Tuesday at our farewell dinner. I met George after class. What a nice time we had! He took me to his sister Larissa's house. She gave us lunch: wine, coffee with cream, kefir, honey, borsch, bread, cheese, and watermelon. I met her son who is the lead singer and accordion player for the Don Cossack State Orchestra. He spoke a little English, but Larissa wanted to know what was going on so she kept saying, "Speak Russian! Speak Russian!" I'm always less fluent when someone like George is around correcting every phrase. I know it's good for me, but I tend to hold back trying to speak more than I would otherwise.

I also met Larissa's husband. They have a nice house and garden. They have very large rooms, two or three bedrooms. It was like a middle-class home in the U.S. Larissa and her husband are retired teachers.

Then George and I went to his sister Natasha's, and his sister Sasha and two older aunts were also there. I met them, and they gave me a bag of delicious plums. His sister lives in one of the courtyards I have spoken of, very common in this city. Her house looked like a shack from the outside, but inside it was well furnished and comfortable. She said she had plenty of heat in the winter, and that oil for heating wasn't very expensive.

Natasha, Sasha, and George had planned to visit their mother's grave today, on her birthday. So I went with them,

by bus and tram to the graveyard. Their grandfather and grandmother are also buried there. It was interesting to see this graveyard. It had many marble headstones and some of wood. Most had epitaphs and pictures of the deceased. The average price for a marble headstone was about 300 rubles. We drank cognac and ate apples to toast and honor the dead relatives. They talked a lot about their mother and how wonderful she was. On the way out, George told me that he, of course, is an atheist, but these are traditions we all carry out. We then took the tram to my hotel. At our stop was a van where they sold kvas, a common Russian drink, mildly alcoholic. It's actually very tasty. It was like a slightly alcoholic sparkling apple cider.

George's sister Sasha invited me and two others of my group to lunch tomorrow. George then walked me to the hotel. I had told him earlier that we were going to have some sort of graduation ceremony to receive our certificates of completion of our language classes. George is a reporter for *Moscow Radio*, so he spoke to our guide, Galya, and she agreed to let him interview some of us and take pictures after the program. It was an interesting ceremony, and interview, but what a surprise! One of the British students from my class, whom I considered the best Russian speaker of our group, cut so many classes that he didn't receive a certificate! He did receive the same gift packet the rest of us did, however.

Later that evening, we had our graduation dinner at a restaurant on the shore of the Kuban River, where I swam last week. It was quite a feast. We drank lots of champagne also, of course, and many toasts, to students-to-teachers-to hosts, etc. We students presented a variety show, which actually turned out quite well, with singing, dancing, comedy and such. I sang in two performances and played harmonica in one. One of the students did a comedy routine preceding our singing performance of "Kalinka," one of the songs we were taught by our music teacher, Zhenia. The comedy routine was

hilarious! One of our fellow students imitated Zhenia correcting our pronunciation, and the disappointed looks our teacher would get on his face. Then he'd tap the baton on the music stand and say, "Nyet, nyet, nyet!" and then repeat the word again with his finger by his tongue and upper teeth, to show what we should do to get the word right. At first I thought this might offend Zhenia and the other teachers. But although he blushed beet red, he and the other teachers, our guide, and everyone couldn't stop laughing!

We gave our teachers gifts. I got addresses of both Elenas, and my teacher tells me she will correspond with me, but I must write only in Russian, because she reads no English. Pavel, one of the intermediate teachers, gave me a gift of a very nice book to help my Russian language. It was a great and memorable evening!

September 17th – I went to a bath house today with Alex, a young woman British student, whom I especially like. We thought it would be baths where you soak, and steam rooms. But actually they were for people who possibly don't have showers or tubs at home. You all strip in one room, then walk into another where there are metal basins that you fill with water and bring to the stone benches and you sit there and wash yourselves with about forty other women. People wash and scrub one another. It wasn't too exotic, but an interesting experience. The price was 15 kopeks. One woman asked us, "Don't you have a bathtub at the hotel?"

At 12:30 George arrived to take Cindy, Immacolata and me to Sasha's for lunch. She had a huge spread for us. We met her daughter Ira, who did almost all the serving and cleaning of the table. She's eleven years old, born in August, the same age as my son Anthony. She's a straight "A" student and also a track competitor, and stamp collector. Sasha's husband and George's brother were also there. We had a long talk with George about atheism. Unfortunately his sister was not feeling

well. She had gone to the doctor and then returned and lay down, so she couldn't participate in the discussion.

As I have mentioned, Cindy is a student of theology and although she feels, from what she's seen, that Soviet people are good and live what she considers, "Christian" lives, she said she feels there must be something missing without religion. George replied that if there is a God, or if there isn't, what difference does it make? You care about other people because you want to; it makes for a better life. But Cindy just couldn't accept George's point of view, and is sure there must be something greatly lacking when so many are atheists.

Immacolatta and I feel more like "to each his own," and that it's more important how people treat one another than what their personal beliefs are. George pointed out that though there are many atheists, there are many believers as well. To make matters more difficult for Cindy, however, she is also suffering from an allergy to some plant blooming here in Krasnodar. So while she is engaging in all these infuriating conversations about religion she's also sniffing, sneezing, and constantly blowing her nose. One thing about her, though, she just doesn't let this allergy get her down. She's been in agony ever since we arrived in Krasnodar over three weeks ago, but remains cheerful, and is always fun to be with. She is the eternal optimist, sort of like me. I guess that's why we're such good friends.

We had a nice time at Sasha's, ate a delicious feast, drank juice and again the liquor called "Disco," that tastes like Drambuie, had good conversation, and took a taxi home.

BACK TO MOSCOW AND MY TIME BEFORE MY GROUP ARRIVES

We packed this evening and caught the train at 1:30 a.m., an awful time to have to be up. Several young people from Krasnodar were there to see their new friends off. A number of them were the boyfriends or girlfriends of the British students, whom they had met here. There was lots of kissing and hugging goodbye. And lots of tears as well.

I must admit I really liked this town, and hope to return someday.

September 18th – I slept well in the train. The 1:40 a.m. departure was timed perfectly for us to pass the Don River while eating breakfast in the restaurant car. Then the train stopped at Kharkov, where it was raining. Arrival in Moscow is to be at 6:30 a.m. tomorrow.

September 19th – We arrived O.K., no rain, 9° C (about 48° F) – cold. Moscow looks so beautiful this time of year! I was here last year in April when all the trees were bare. What a difference, now! Some leaves are yellow and dropping, but most trees are very thick and green. Beautiful flower gardens are everywhere. The city is clean as usual. We're staying with the cockroaches at Sevastopol Hotel again. Oh, well, I got used to them in Krasnodar, as well as in a couple of places I lived in Sacramento, California, but I hate the hard beds here! I called Paula as soon as I got here. She's busy until 8:00 this evening with an article deadline for *Progress Publishers*.

I went down a list of contacts, but couldn't get in touch with any but Holly Smith, another American translator, living in Moscow. She's very busy today, but gave me the name of a friend, Sasha, an artist, who is a student of aviation, but is now on vacation from school and would like to show an American around. He speaks English also. So Immacolata and I decided to try to meet him later.

First we went downtown to the book and record store. I bought a book of poems by Mussa Jalil, a Turkish Soviet writer. I never had heard of him, but it was the only book that had Russian on one page, and the English translation on the next, the type of book I've been wanting, to help me with the Russian language. I also bought three records: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, and arias sung by the famous Russian tenor, Nikolai Gedda. They cost about 1 ruble, 30 kopeks each, a good price for a stereo L.P. They have an interesting way of making purchases here. First you tell a sales person what you want and they give you a paper with the price on it. Then you take these pieces of paper to the centrally located cash register they call, "Kassa." That's where you line up to pay. But the line goes very fast. Then you take your receipt and go collect your merchandise.

It was cold, cloudy, and, now and then, sunny today. We sure did a lot of walking. Downtown I called Sasha and he said he'd be glad to meet us and show us his apartment. Well, we made a wrong connection on the subway and were a half hour late, but he was waiting patiently for us.

His attic apartment is really nice. Immacolata says she has seen many like this in her visits to France, and that French attic apartments are considered very chic there. His paintings and sketches cover the walls. In some places he also has painted the walls themselves and has a 'tracing paper like' covering over the paintings and sketches so as to make them appear 'out of focus.' He also has antique furniture, not in good shape, but old chairs, tables and other things he has found thrown out. He says he knows several places in town where 'nice' things are thrown into trash containers. He fishes them out, repairs them, and decorates his apartment with them. It's a large apartment comparatively, but to get to the bedroom you must climb through a closet.

Immacolata and I talked for a couple of hours with him.

He is apparently the great grandson on his father's side of a prince, who is buried in the graveyard near Dostoevsky in Leningrad. Also he is the great grandson on his mother's side of a Swedish man, Geisler, who went to America and bought the patent from Alexander Graham Bell to start the telephone company in old Russia. He's sweet, and seems very 'down to earth' in many ways, but you can tell he feels that because of his heritage, he really deserves more in life than he's getting.

We left Sasha and went to a department store where Immacolata wanted to buy woolen underwear. She's visited the Soviet Union every year for the past ten years, and speaks as much Russian as English. She also speaks French, her native Italian, and German, which she teaches as well. Although she travels a lot in Europe, she says she loves coming to the USSR, which is the only country where noticeable changes are evident every year, and always for the better. She says the people look healthier, their clothing is better, their shoes are better, there are noticeably more and better cars every year. The shops are nicer, and the food is better every time she comes here.

We took the subway home. It is so beautiful, on the central line especially! All kinds of different shades of marble, mosaics, carved wildlife, chandeliers, paintings, stained glass, just like a museum!

This evening I went to Paula's. She is, at the moment, very overwhelmed with the masses of Americans that keep visiting her. I definitely got the feeling she's weary and needs more time with her two boys.

September 20th – This is the last day for all the others on the language tour. It's a little scary for me, especially since all the problems haven't been cleared up concerning my vouchers, which is a whole other story. I should have had them in my hands before I left Krasnodar. I still haven't received them, but I have the voucher numbers and my Soviet

guide assures me that's all I really need. So I'm hoping she will handle things for me.

I went around taking pictures with Sasha today. I took lots of pictures of his apartment and two Polaroid's for him. He was thrilled with that and is now going to paint a picture for me to take home at the end of October when we're in Moscow. I took lots of pictures in Gorky Park. It's really beautiful! I took some from the top of the Ferris wheel there. It was the most beautiful day. I took pictures also around Moscow's main swimming pool. I wish I had brought my suit. It was a perfect day to swim, plus the water there is kept at 30° C (86° F) all year round except summer, when people are expected to swim in lakes and rivers, or to be on vacation, so they close the pool entirely. Sasha and I talked a lot about our philosophies of life. He said he has sort of a "Zen Buddhist" philosophy which he explained like this: Society changes as just an act of nature, from slavery, to feudalism, to capitalism, to socialism, just naturally, despite what anyone wants. He believes in luck. Whatever happens or doesn't happen to him will be due to luck. But he kept saying that everything is nature; you can't go against nature; nature always wins out.

He receives 40 rubles per month for being a student/artist. And his mother sends him an additional 40 rubles per month. He seems to live OK on this. He looks quite healthy and well fed. But despite his "Zen Buddhist" beliefs plus luck and nature, he still holds a lot of anger for what he says Stalin did to his aristocratic family. I'm not sure if they were killed by him or placed in prisons. But, anyway, he speaks of that, and of how he longs to move to New York, and be a rich artist and pal around with Yoko Ono. Good luck!!

Tonight Cindy and I went to Paula's, where Sharon, another Citizen Diplomat, whom I know, and a couple of her group were visiting. Paula's in a much better frame of mind, it seems, tonight. Apparently a U.S. friend of hers was in town

and was visiting her every night and staying late all last week. It was getting a little difficult for Paula.

We had an interesting discussion about what Soviet people should specifically object to and try to change in their government's peace policy. Cindy, like so many others, feels that they should pressure their government to give "human rights" to all Soviet citizens and to the people of Eastern Europe. Paula said she gets very discouraged with that answer, which she feels is changing the subject and discussing a different problem, that is: which items of Socialist domestic policy should be changed according to the beliefs of Capitalist countries, and which items of Capitalist domestic policy should be changed according to Socialist views.

Paula feels that discussions of one another's internal policies are another subject, a separate problem, and that it dodges the issue of disarmament and discussing the peace proposals of the U.S.S.R.

Well, Cindy, being the daughter of a wealthy American family, simply doesn't see things the same way. Pursuing her religion, and love of her fellow man is her stated aim, but she does not think of homeless, poor, and occupants of U.S. ghettos, as victims of human rights violations, and therefore feels we must insist on Soviet improvement of *their* human rights record before we should even try to reach a peace agreement .

Soviet people I've talked to feel strongly that *we* violate human rights also, but my observation is that they are much more willing to reach agreement on disarmament first, so at least there will be a world in which to try to solve the other problems.

September 21st – What a terrible day! The British group left at 5 a.m. I went, as told by Marina, the Moscow interpreter and Intourist guide of the British group, to

Metropol Hotel to pick up my ticket to Novgorod, the next place on my itinerary, but I didn't realize I would need my passport and vouchers. As I mentioned, all I have are voucher numbers because the vouchers are still in New York. I had to travel all the way back to the hotel to get my passport and voucher numbers only to find, upon my return, that voucher numbers are no good! I need the vouchers themselves. I went around and around with the woman supposedly responsible to handle my problem. I finally had to resort to calling Paula, and asking for help.

Paula spoke with the woman for a long time, and got very sharp with her, insisting that it was her job, and she had to solve this problem! The woman had no idea who Paula is, and probably suspected she would get her in trouble with her supervisors or something, if she didn't do her job.

Well, whatever it was, it worked. The woman made about 50 calls and finally got me my tickets, but now I have a new problem. I didn't realize until this evening that Novgorod is not on my visa, only Suzdal, where I was to go originally, before my itinerary was changed to Novgorod. My travel agency had screwed up again and neglected to make that change on my visa. So somehow I have to solve that tomorrow before I leave, or I'm sure they won't let me on the train. Then what am I supposed to do?

At least one nice thing happened today despite all the problems. I met two guys, while waiting on a sunny street corner. Happily, the sun had broken through, since the weather until then had been matching the gloom of the difficulties I was having. They were taking pictures of each other with a nice Zenit (Russian 35 mm) camera. At one point one of them sat right up close to me, on the marble bench surrounding the subway entrance, while the other began to take our picture, even though I wasn't asked. I looked at the one next to me and said "me too?" and he said "why not?" and laughed. I asked if

they were Russian tourists, and one of them answered, "No," that they lived in Moscow. We had a very cordial and informative discussion. They insisted that my Russian was totally understandable. I suppose that was true, but I know I brutalized the grammar! To them, though, finding out about the U.S. and making comparisons with the Soviet Union was much more important than worrying about my grammar. They asked about unemployment, soup lines, street people, and the prices of gas, cars, and apartments. Velodya, who did most of the talking, is an oil worker in Siberia. He works two weeks and then comes home to Moscow for two weeks, eleven months out of the year. The twelfth month he gets off completely. For this he gets 600 rubles per month and all round trip flights, plus room and board in Siberia free. He feels he lives quite well for this pay. He pays only 5 rubles per month for his apartment. He says a pound of bread is 20 kopeks. They don't get as much fruit and vegetables as they want, though, and he very definitely seems to have more money than things to buy, and envies U.S. products.

I asked what they think about Gorbachev, and they both said he is the best leader they've known, that he cares about the advancement of all the people. And that he wants to really help the country, and is for peace in a very strong way. They both also felt that Reagan is crazy, and they can't understand why in America, where all the weapons can be purchased by people, no one kills him. They asked me, "Why don't you shoot him?" They laughed, but I think they really meant it!

They asked how I liked their subway, and Moscow generally. I had to admit I like it very much. And that I find it a very beautiful city, especially in the fall. They, as many others I've talked to, really feel snow will come early this year. They said they feel it in the cold breezes that now and then come whipping up.

I don't know if it's just the time of year, but I've been

really watching people here, and I see much more smiling, laughing, talking, and kidding around on the street corners, subways and busses, than last year.

Also, since Immacolata mentioned it, I've been looking more closely at people's clothing and they really do seem much better dressed than just last year. Velodya, however, complained a lot about clothing. He was dressed very nicely, even by Western standards, but says he doesn't like Russian clothing, and his friend agreed – they buy all the European clothing they can get. But, anyway, you see lots of nice-looking men's jackets and shoes, and stylish dresses on women. Padded coats similar to the expensive down ones you see in the U.S. are somewhat common here now.

Velodya and his friend would both like to visit America to buy things, but said they really wouldn't want to live there. They asked why I didn't bring my family over here to live. I told them I love visiting, but I feel like they do. I still have my family, friends and customs in my country that I feel I would miss too much if I moved away. We said goodbye, and I took the subway back to my hotel.

When I got back, I decided to call one of the contacts from a list my American friend, Bill, a speaker of Russian and often-time visitor to the USSR, gave me. He was also named Sasha, who writes books about American youth. He was on vacation in Sochi, but his wife, Svetlana, and his daughter, Tanya, were there, and they both speak English. They invited me to visit them tomorrow before my train trip to Novgorod. They were very excited to hear from an American, especially a friend of Bill's.

They took turns talking to me and obviously enjoyed using their English, and hearing English spoken. It's so difficult to improve my Russian, when these English speakers keep spoiling me. It's simply impossible for me to insist on speaking Russian when I know they speak English.

Well, thank God, Marina called me, and is going to handle my problem of Novgorod not being on the visa, so it looks like all will turn out O.K. after all.

September 22nd – It's so exciting to look out the window and see blue skies, first thing in the morning. I thought, how great, maybe I'll even go swimming! But as I watched, black clouds started moving in from the horizon. Then it seemed that they may be moving to the West and might miss the city. Who knows: we'll see what it's like after 12:00 Noon, when I have to check out.

Maybe it's because I'm alone now that I feel so emotional. I was so touched by the Hungarian man, who knew a little English and insisted on helping me carry my luggage. He was a sweet, handsome, young guy, about twenty-five, not flirting at all, but just helpful. When we parted and I thanked him, he bowed and said, "Hello!" It's no big deal. Even now when I'm doing pretty well in Russian, I'll get a little nervous



Bill Mandell, center, who gave me so many names of folks in USSR to visit on my tours.

sometimes and say “please,” instead of “thank you.” And once I remember saying “goodbye,” instead of “thank you.” I was so embarrassed, I really blushed! I guess some people would have laughed at the Hungarian man’s error, but I was so moved by his kindness, that I choked up a little. I was so grateful that he was so helpful and trying to speak my language.

Then later, when I checked my extra luggage into a storage service, there at the hotel, so I wouldn’t have to carry it with me during my three day stay in Novgorod, the man who helped me, probably in his sixties, was also so nice! Somehow I had misunderstood him and thought he had said 19 rubles, when actually he had said 90 kopeks! I don’t know how I could have made that mistake. I just get so nervous, sometimes, when I have to understand Russian that I often understand much less than I should. The gentleman couldn’t understand why I was so confused and worried about the price. He said “Look!” and took a piece of paper and wrote out 90 kopeks. I laughed, and said, “I’m so sorry, I misunderstood, that is so inexpensive!”

He became really curious about me, found out I was from the U.S., and really wanted to talk to me. He wanted me to explain how it was possible that people live on the streets in America. He just couldn’t comprehend, how such a thing is possible in such a rich country. “Where do they eat?” he asked, “What do they do?” He was so kind and friendly, not at all accusing me of being responsible for such problems. I explained as well as I could, and told him that there are lots of common people that try to help, by providing shelter, and soup kitchens, like, for example, the Salvation Army. But, I told him many people still get no help, and it’s a big problem in our county.

He told me, very proudly, that he pays only 5 rubles a month for his apartment, and said he lives quite well.

September 23rd – What a day this turned out to be! I checked out at noon. No swimming today! The black clouds I had seen moving in this morning did not miss the city. All day it rained! Also Marina couldn't contact the people who supposedly help foreigners out of their predicaments, so I had to go myself to the address where she always found the phone busy. The building was not too easy to find and I arrived there with four other people, a party of Russian-speaking Central Asians.

Out front was a doorbell. They rang and a militia man answered. He said he couldn't help them at all and they would have to use the phone down the street, and gave them a number to call. At first, he thought I was with them, and I was afraid he'd lock the door and leave, so I quickly interjected that I'm not with them, and that I have a terrible problem with my visa that must be solved now!! The militia man looked both angry and sad – weary, maybe – and said he can't help me. I argued with him for about 20 minutes, and told him over and over that this problem had to be solved right now! And that he had to help, or call somebody who would help, because I will not leave!!

I asked him if he had heard of the homeless who sleep on the streets in the U.S., and told him that if he doesn't help me I will be an American sleeping on the streets of Moscow, right in front of this door tonight, because I have nowhere else to go except to the hotel in Novgorod, where I cannot go unless Novgorod is on my visa! He understood my Russian perfectly! Actually so many people keep asking me about the homeless in America, that my vocabulary in that subject has become quite good!

He finally took my visa and passport and went upstairs to call. It had stopped raining for a while, luckily, because he locked me outside. Finally he returned and told me I had to go to another address, on Gorky Street. He told me the bus to

take. I really felt he was not just trying to get rid of me, but simply helping, so I left.

On the way there I met a nice woman, who helped me find my way. The bus was really crowded: we were squeezed in, as they say, like sardines. I couldn't move even when I got to Gorky Street. A woman near me had told me she'd let me know ahead of time when to get off, but she didn't tell me until we were a half block from the stop. I started pressing myself toward the exit, but before I got there more people were pushing in!! I kept saying, "Please, Please! I have to get out!!" But no one listened. Finally one man caught my eye and asked "Now?" And I said loudly, "Yes! I must get out NOW". So several people squeezed out, while the doors were closing, and pulled me. Others behind pushed me up off the floor, and out into two men's arms, still pulling my bag behind me. They deposited me and my bag on the curb, and squeezed back into the bus. The hook handle on my umbrella caught on someone's shirt or coat on my way out and I heard it rip! Also my finger was scratched by something and was bleeding by the time I was finally safely on the street!

When you come from a city in the U.S. where the public transportation leaves much to be desired, one really appreciates the abundance of inexpensive, dependable public transportation in the Soviet Union; however, after my experience today, I can sure understand why everybody complains about the busses here, their over-crowdedness especially.

I, however, being a visitor, and still in awe of what I consider an excellent public transportation system, stood there in the pouring rain and laughed at what had just happened! I just couldn't get out of my mind, the picture of me being picked up like a child and handed to people on the curb!

I finally got to the main Intourist Office and they spoke English there, which helped matters considerably. They made

a couple of calls and said they called Novgorod, and that everything is all set up for my arrival. They typed “Novgorod,” on my visa, and deleted “Suzdal.” They solved the whole thing in five minutes. What a relief! Why Marina didn’t send me straight to Gorky Street, I’ll never know.

So there I was at about 1:00 p.m., hungry, rain pouring down, and not knowing where to go until 3:00 p.m., when I’m to call Svetlana and Tanya. I decided to try to find the book store again. This is Sunday, but it’s a special Sunday, when all stores are open. It’s amazing to me to see the streets crowded with people on a Sunday, when it’s pouring rain.

I took the Metro, but I got all twisted around somehow, and it was about 2:00 by the time I was in the vicinity of the book store. I decided to forget it. Tanya had told me that Sevastopolskaya Metro Station was not far from her house, so I decided to go there and call, since by then it should be about 3:00.

But when I got there, I got no answer; waited until 4:00, still no answer. I was close to Sevastopol Hotel, so I decided to go there and use their bathroom and phone. I got there soaking wet, and trying to explain why I was back after having checked out. They were nice, and let me use the bathroom and phone. I finally reached Tanya, and they were having terrible problems. Apparently Svetlana’s mother is very old, and has been visiting them. She was to be put on the train this evening, but has become sick. They don’t know what they are going to do. She asked if I could come tomorrow, but I reminded her I am leaving tonight. I said I’d call when I return to Moscow in three days, but then they will be gone to Sochi to meet Sasha and vacation until the end of October.

All in all things just weren’t working out. Here it was 4:30 in the afternoon, rain still pouring down, and I’m in the lobby of a hotel I’m checked out of. I looked through my list of

contacts again. I just couldn't bring myself to call Paula, and just be one more American overwhelming her. So I decided to call Holly, another contact, an American living in Moscow. Holly, it turned out, was leaving for the theater at 6:30, but suggested Tracy, another American translator living in Moscow. I called Tracy, and she said, "Wonderful, come on over!" That sure felt good to hear!

She gave me directions, so off I headed off on another adventure. I found the right bus stop, but while I was waiting under the canopy, out of the rain with a couple of other people, a guy about thirty approached and from about ten feet away started talking to me. I answered, and then it became obvious to the others and him that I was a foreigner. He continued to take a great interest in me and came closer. By then I realized he had been drinking quite a lot, which hadn't been apparent earlier. I tried to limit the conversation, but he wouldn't take any hints. Others who had gathered there by then were getting really irritated at him. A few people glared at him, and another scolded him for drinking too much, and told him to leave me alone!

Finally he got on the bus with me and said he would take me all the way to my destination. I said, "No, I want to go on my own!" Finally he did get the message, but I was so distressed by then, after he had gotten off the bus, that I missed my stop. I got off the bus, and had to walk back about four blocks. Luckily I found Tracy's apartment easily.

We had a delightful evening, chatting and entertaining her thirteen-month old son. Her husband Zhora cooked dinner for us: a delicious borsch, tuna, bread and butter, and tea with milk and honey. I really dove in, I was so hungry, what a treat! It turned out that Zhora is an actor, and will be in a play on the first of October. I'll be back in Moscow then, and I'm hoping it won't be too late for me to see it before I take the train to Leningrad to meet my group.

Well, the time came for me to leave and catch my train to Novgorod. I was somewhat nervous about that, because I've seen the train stations, and they seem complicated. Of course, up till now I have always had a guide to simply follow. So I planned to arrive 30 minutes early just in case I had some trouble. It turned out to be a piece of cake. I just went to the Komsomolskaya Metro Station. I asked the first person I saw, if he could direct me to the train to Novgorod. He pointed to the train. However, it had been completely obvious. There was a sign right there that said #42 to Novgorod. All I had to do was look for car #12, and there I was. I gave my ticket to the conductor, located my compartment, and got right into bed, I was so tired.

After a few minutes, a woman came in, my compartment-mate, whose name, I found out later, was Zoya. She is a scientist in the field of chemistry. She spoke so clearly and simply for me that I had no trouble understanding her. Tired as I was, she was so interesting that we talked until late that night, she asking me about America, and I asking her about the Soviet Union. I found out she is part of a group that has hosted American scientists from New York and other east coast cities of the U.S. She and her husband have 800 rubles left per month after paying their rent, utilities, and a garage where they park their car. She feels they live quite well and that those in the Soviet Union who want to move to the West are very few. Some young people may want to leave, but, in her opinion, the overwhelming majority of adults are pleased with their country, its politics, and culture. She loves their cultural events, and told me of one "spectacle" she'd gone to recently where, during the Moscow Youth Festival, Swan Lake was performed in five different rings in the arena of a huge stadium simultaneously so all of the 30,000 people present could see!

If ever I couldn't understand her, she would explain, using other words, until I got her meaning. We finally tired of

conversation and went to sleep. I always sleep so well on these trains; they just seem to rock me to sleep, especially this compartment, which is on the “soft car” as they call it, that is on special shock absorbers.

September 24th – An Intourist guide met me at the station in Novgorod. As soon as I stepped out of the train she caught my eye and walked up and introduced herself. She took me and a Canadian man traveling alone to the hotel.

NOVGOROD

The Intourist person in the hotel made one call and quickly solved my problem of not having vouchers and assured me that when I get back to Moscow everything will have been taken care of for my remaining stay there. So, all having been handled, I accepted the Canadian man's offer, and went on a boring city tour. (He had paid 20 rubles for a private tour in a car, and said it would cost no more if one more person came along.)

Churches and Icons are just not my thing! The monument to the Russian Millennium I found very interesting, though. We had lunch at what they call a "children's restaurant." I enjoyed lunch more than the whole tour! The restaurant was decorated for kids, with an aquarium in the floor in one area, and an aviary. Also there were many bright colors and pictures on the walls. I ordered a thick cabbage soup, which came with the usual wonderful bread and butter, a sandwich with cheese and sausage, coffee, and grapes and ice cream for dessert. The total for my meal, which included coffee I bought for the Canadian man, came to 1 ruble and 50 kopeks.

The guide ate lunch with us. She was a young pretty ex-pioneer, who used to be one of the chosen "best students" who take shifts standing guard over the eternal flame, at one of the monuments in memory of those who perished in WWII. I relayed to her my experiences on the trains, observing the wonderful behavior of Soviet children. She laughed and said, "You just keep watching. We have plenty of little monsters!"

I decided, after the tour, to try out the Finnish Banya, which the guide had pointed out to me. It was only a few blocks from my hotel. On the way there three eleven-year old boys stopped me and asked what time it was. When they became aware I was a foreigner, they wanted to talk to me. I told them where I was from, and that I had a boy their age.

One of them asked what his name was. I said we call him Tony, and each one repeated – “Twannee, Twannee, Twannee.” One wanted to write to him and asked for our address, but I had no pen and neither did they. They were such sweet little tykes. I asked what they thought about America, and one said a lot of which I could only understand that “Bad Reagan, wants to drop bombs on us!” I asked what they thought about Gorbachev. They all agreed he was a good man. I said, “Then you like him?” and one of the boys said in English, “Yes, I do!” I said, “Oh, you speak English!” He said “Yes.” And I said, “Are you all learning English?” Another one of them said, “No,” and pointed out that he and the first one are learning English, and said in Russian, that the third boy was studying German.

They walked me to the Finnish Banya, pointed it out to me, and went on their way. I said in Russian, “Thanks, Goodbye.” And two of the boys said “Goodbye” in English, and the third one said “Auf Wiedersehen.” I really wish I had been able to give them my address. Those moments pass so quickly that you don’t see until later how you missed an opportunity. From now on I carry pen and paper!

The bath house, or banya, what a trip! I told the woman in the ticket booth, that I was an American and new to the banya. “I’ve never been here before and don’t know what to do at all.”

So she had me buy a birch branch with leaves, for 5 kopeks, and showed me to the dressing rooms. There she told everyone I was an American and new here. They were all so kind! Although I had brought a towel, they saw that I brought no soap or scrubby, so a woman loaned me hers. I stripped down like the others and they showed me where to go. I went into the main room which was very similar to the one in Krasnodar, with the basins to fill with water and stone benches to sit on and clean yourself. A woman named Vera

soon started showing me the ropes. She said, "First we go to the sauna." This was a cross between a sauna, as we know it, and a steam room. It was very hot and not full of steam, but every now and then someone would step on a lever of sorts on the floor, which would spray water on whatever was heating the room and it would steam up the room for a while until we were hot and sweaty. Then people would take turns patting each other with the leafy branches. But because I was the guest, I was not allowed to pat myself or others, instead everyone took turns patting me with the leafy branches. It really felt good. They say it's supposed to stimulate circulation and loosen dead skin.

As everywhere else, I got many questions. Extreme heat and being patted with a branch doesn't exactly lend itself to answering questions, but I did as well as I could. They wanted to know why I was here. When did I get here? Was I with a group, or alone? Why was I alone? Do I have a family? If I have so many kids, why aren't I fat? Where do I live? And so on....

One person I met there works in the hotel where I'm staying. She came to me later and whispered, "Are you selling anything, jeans or any western clothing?" I told her "No, I didn't come here to make money, just to meet people and be friends. And I hoped by Americans meeting Soviets, we would both see no need to be enemies, and this hopefully will help bring peace to the world."

Anyway, after the sauna, Vera led me out to the "basin" which is like a small swimming pool filled with cold water. She was irritated that it wasn't cold enough. She said that going from extreme hot to extreme cold is good for you. So after that, we repeated the process: hot sauna, "pattings" with the birch branch, cold pool, etc., for about four repetitions, then she told me, "Now it's time to use the soap and scrubby." So we soaped and scrubbed. Again she had to help scrub me,

but, as the guest, I could not help scrub her. I washed my hair as well, and, after one more dip in the pool, I was exhausted and had to go. I thanked Vera for all her help and wished her well. As I was dressing she came out and tried to insist I sit under the dryer to dry my hair before I go out into the rain. I didn't know it had been raining. It had been partly cloudy and partly sunny all morning but had clouded over and was now pouring rain. I didn't want to dry my hair but just wrapped the towel around my head and put my hood over it. After an hour it all cleared up and was sunny again.

From my hotel room I can see what looks like a very old trailer court – little tin huts with windows where I thought possibly people live. I asked the maid, and she laughed and said, “Oh no, they are for storage!” The only time anyone would stay in a place like that would be if it was their “dacha” (summer house). Many people, she said, have such “dachas” if their main interest is having only an area to grow crops and a small tin hut on it to spend the night, store tools, etc.

I spent the rest of the evening listening to the radio and keeping warm in a comfy bed.

September 24th – I had breakfast alone in the hotel restaurant this morning. I should say, I started alone, but was joined by a tour guide from Leningrad. She spoke a tiny bit of English. I was so embarrassed! I had seen two eggs, still warm in the shell, and thought they were mine. I was breaking them open when the tour guide sat down. I asked her if they had been her eggs. She said “Yes,” and laughed. She said she didn't really want them. I thought she was just being nice, but she insisted that if she wanted some she could order more.

I knew more Russian than she knew English, so we did better in Russian. It was sort of a funny situation. Leningrad is overrun with Danish tourists right now because of a soccer game to be held tomorrow in Moscow between Denmark and the USSR. So they didn't have enough Danish-speaking

guides. This woman, who is an expert in Spanish and Portuguese, had to lead one of the Danish groups, which happened to be touring Novgorod on their way to Moscow, because they could speak a little English and so could she.

It wasn't working out well at all. The Danes were angry because they had been brought so little coffee. They kept complaining to their guide and she'd go ask for more coffee in the kitchen, but was told that additional cups of coffee would cost 25 kopeks each. The Danes finally got the message via the guide and the one best English-speaking Dane who interpreted most things for them. They were so angry because the first cups were too tiny; they were more like a third of a cup. (This is a custom in all hotel's I've seen so far, tiny cups for coffee, and large cups for tea.) They obviously just didn't have the English words to complain clearly enough to the guide. I think she suspected what they were complaining about, but the communication gap protected her from any further hassles with the kitchen.

We had a nice breakfast, and she helped me get more coffee, free. The people in the kitchen were really cranky about all this. The guide gave me her extra cheese, sausage, and butter to go on a roll for my lunch.

As I was finishing breakfast, I heard English being spoken by a group passing me. I followed them and talked to them for a while. It's really too bad tourists are so sheltered, and have absolutely no contact with the Soviet people. None had been in any apartments of the people here. All they did was go from event to event and hear their guide's opinion on everything. No wonder Americans get such narrow-minded opinions of the Soviet Union. I don't know how such a situation could be solved, except that they should learn a little Russian before they come here.

I wanted to go on their tour with them (although I'd seen all the Icons I needed to see yesterday) because I wanted to

try to possibly influence them with my views of the Russian people by continuing to relate my experiences. But unfortunately to join the tour would cost me 8 rubles, and I couldn't afford it.

So I returned to my room. I needed to use the iron, so I entered the ironing room and spoke to the two women there. They asked if I was Czech, or German, and were thrilled to hear I was American. They said they were amazed and that I had much less accent than the East Europeans that come here. What a nice compliment! They also told me that most Americans who come here don't speak any Russian.

I asked them where they would recommend I go today by bus. One of them said I should speak to the service bureau about a tour. I told her I saw all the churches and the Kremlin yesterday and what I wanted to see was department stores, markets, parks and theaters. She looked like she thought I was crazy, on this gloomy, rainy day to want to go out on the street, but she showed me where to go, and off I went.

It was pouring rain, but not too cold. I decided to walk rather than take the bus as was suggested, because this town is very small. I walked by the banya, and turned left across the bridge toward town. I walked around looking into stores and small markets, also farmers' market-type arrangements, one where a young woman was selling produce out of a horse-drawn cart. I realized I soon must find a restroom, so I began looking around for a restaurant or hotel. I asked around and finally was directed to a hotel nearby, where I was allowed to use the restroom. The hotel was near what looked like another river, but, at closer look, it probably was a river only in the spring after snow had melted, and now was just a stream, with boats docked in one location there. I really don't think they could be used now.

By then the sun had come out. I walked along the levee bordering this stream and after a while saw an inviting tree,

with a raised dry grassy area near the trunk where I could sit and soak in the sun for a while. I sat for about 15 minutes, and the sun disappeared behind another cloud. I left, and passed a man replacing broken window panes. I wanted to look closer and observe his methods, but I somehow didn't have the nerve.

Then I passed a two-story, beautiful, green wooded house, with a big yard, a well-kept garden, a nice fence and an elderly woman working out in the front yard. I wanted to ask her if I could have a tour of her house. I kept thinking, what could I lose? The worst she could do is say no. But I just couldn't think how to ask, without it seeming too strange, so I just walked by. I passed a lot where two men were building a log cabin, a very large one. I said, "Good morning." One of the men answered, "Good morning," but neither seemed receptive to conversation, so I walked on.

I passed schools and playgrounds with lots of children there; I passed a library, then reached the bridge leading back to the hotel.

In the course of this morning walk, I had been approached by three different people asking me questions, but unless it's for the time, I never understand the questions people are asking; maybe it's local dialect or something, but what's interesting to me is that people seem to think I belong here. I know I look strange compared to natives but I must look like someone who knows the answers. I usually say that I'm a foreigner, and just looking around myself.

At the bridge going back to the hotel, I met two elderly women who started talking to me. They were so friendly! One with a large toothless grin was deaf, so the other asked me questions and yelled the answers into the other one's ear. They were both born and lived all their lives in Novgorod. What stories I bet they could tell! Very sad ones, I'm sure. I found out yesterday that 230,000 gave up their lives fighting the

fascists here in this town. It was occupied for 2½ years by Nazis, and there were only four buildings left when it was liberated!

I crossed the bridge and visited another department store. There was quite a crowd at the shoe department where a bunch of Yugoslavian shoes had apparently just arrived. They were good quality leather and not too expensive. I asked the price of a nice pair; it was 10 rubles – inexpensive! The boots in the men’s department averaged about 50 rubles.

I wanted some milk with my sandwich for lunch, and finally found a place where they sold milk. I bought a half-liter carton of milk for 15 kopeks, and the clerk really wanted to talk to me. He ended up running out of the store after me. He was young, about twenty-five, pink cheeked and red headed. Naturally, what he wanted was Western clothing. Did I have anything I would want to sell? I told him no. He apologized and blushed. In English he said “Sorry.”

On the way back to the hotel, I saw a billboard advertising a movie with Alla Pugachova in it. I didn’t know if it was old or now playing. I stopped two militia men and asked them. One of them said, “It’s playing now at the Russia Movie House, all day every day.” The other asked if I was German. I said no, that I was American, and they both complimented my use of the Russian Language. If I could only speak as well in complex conversation as I can in short simple sentences, I’d have it made over here. I think I’ll go see that film this afternoon.

On the last block on the way to the hotel, a woman saw me carrying milk and said something friendly to me as she passed, which I couldn’t understand, but I think she was commenting on the fact I had to go purchase milk at a store outside the hotel, and was commiserating that the hotel couldn’t provide it for me.

I got back to the hotel and had my sandwich and a cup of milk. Hot tea and milk seemed like a good idea also, so I found the maid and she said she'd fix me some. She stopped her cleaning and set up a very ornate samovar in the ironing room. I got the clear message that this was not normal procedure, but she kept smiling and smiling at me and then brought the whole samovar and teapot into my room. She apologized over and over for not having sugar. After about a half hour, she came to retrieve the samovar. I helped, and carried the teapot for her.

She's quite elderly. I'd really like to talk to her, but I'm so hesitant to ask questions that require long answers, because it's so hard for me to understand people, and I feel like a fool saying, "Please repeat; speak slower please," or just smiling and listening and not understanding.

I saw the Alla Pugachova movie, "Season of Wonder." It was fun to watch, like a long rock-music video, similar to those in the U.S., only it also had a story to it. It was easily understood, even though I did not totally understand the language. The dancing was interesting. It looked like a combination of the "Jerk" (an American dance of the 1960's) with a little of the arm movements of "popping." I think American kids would really get a kick out of this film.

I talked to several people on the way to the film and to a young worker of "Montazh," which I think is structural assembly of buildings. He told me he really likes living here in Novgorod. I would somehow feel that young people would find it boring here, because it's sort of a small town, but he said he didn't find it boring at all.

On the way back to my hotel, after the movie, I was holding my galoshes in my hand, and an elderly woman, selling mushrooms in a stand by a building, rushed up to me and asked where I got those galoshes. (Once again a person mistakes me for a resident!) I told her I got them in the U.S.,

and that I'm American. She started laughing and said she wondered why she hadn't seen such nice galoshes around here. Then she wanted to ask me questions. She asked why I was here, and when I told her the "peace exchange" part, she smiled and said she agreed that was important, and asked if I liked the Russian people. I said, "Very much!" And she said, "We're just a simple people, and don't mean anyone any harm!" She said that she just couldn't understand why the arms race had to go on. "Why? Why?" She kept asking, not really for me to answer, but more of a commentary.



Woman I met in Novgorod

While we were talking, a woman nearby asked her if she could understand me. She said, “Yes, I understand her!” I apologized for my terrible grammar and she said, “It’s O.K., you’re doing O.K., you just need practice.” She wished me well, and shook my hand, with a strong peasant handshake. She had hands as calloused as mine! She was dressed very warmly, in old clothing and had a much wrinkled face and just a few teeth. She looked about ninety. Just like others I’ve met, this woman was so real, so down to earth, just truth and innocence on her face. Could it be just wishful thinking on my part? I really don’t think so.

I spent the evening listening to the radio. There was a drama on. At one point it sounded quite exciting. It was about a young woman and man in love. The father of the woman invited the lover to duel and apparently did kill him. All the details were just too hard for me to follow.

My room is really cold; even though there is a heater, little heat comes out. The heat never reaches my bed. In fact, I don’t think it radiates more than a foot from the heater. There’s a large double-paned window, but too much cold still gets through. The drapes could help, if they were fastened right at the top, but they don’t pull snugly and the apparatus at the top is too high to reach from my table. Also, this morning, there was no hot water for the shower, but tonight there was plenty. So I decided to get even with them and took a long hot steamy shower, which warmed up both me and the room. I hope I didn’t deprive others of their shower, but if they hadn’t been out drinking, they could have had showers too!! (Just a joke.) So, anyway, I slept very well and cozy warm.

September 25th – I woke up to the usual Soviet National Anthem. It’s a little too pompous, but awfully pretty. I’ve heard it before during T.V. shows of the Olympics, when we used to meet together, before the refreezing of the cold war. Speaking of freezing, that’s what it was when I got up. And no

hot water, again! I hope this is not an omen for the rest of the trip. It's only been 4° C (39° F) at night here, and I know we'll find a lot cooler weather by the end of October.

I ate in the restaurant, made myself a sandwich out of the meat and roll for my lunch, and set off for a walk to take pictures. It was sunny off and on and not too cold. I watched school children on outings. At one point five pioneer boys about twelve or thirteen years old, dressed all nice in their blue suits and red scarves, started teasing some primary school kids. The little kids yelled back at them and the teacher had to calm them all down. The pioneers were long gone by the time the teacher got involved. (I'll be darned; Soviet kids aren't all little angels!) Then I passed the school, the destination of the primary group. In the yard were three pioneer boys of the same age and dress as the others I saw, raking the yard and sweeping the sidewalks. (They were the angel ones.)

I passed the man building the log house again, and asked if it was his own home he was building, or a restaurant (because at that point it looked like it could have been a restaurant). He said it was his own home. But what primitive methods! He was using the butt of an ax and a chisel for everything he did. But the walls were almost finished and it looked very plumb, and sturdy!

I turned the corner and a workman called out something unintelligible to me. But it obviously was a question and not a flirtation. I explained that I couldn't understand, I was a foreigner, etc. This got him and his buddy inside the building interested. They started asking the usual questions: where am I from, what's my name, why am I here. It's getting pretty easy for me to answer the questions now, but, for the life of me I just couldn't understand the first workman (who actually turned out to not be working, but only visiting the guy who was actually doing the job). He obviously had been drinking,

but was not drunk. I guess I caught him early enough in the morning.

He spoke really fast, and could not slow down, but insisted in trying to talk to me. He caught up with me as I walked away. I was getting irritated. Whether he was non-flirtatious, as he seemed, or otherwise, he had a liquor smell and was being too pushy. He kept talking to me and I couldn't understand anything except that his grandfather was a famous composer, who is world-renowned, even in America, by the name of Varlamov. I'd never heard of him, which doesn't mean much. I also understood him when he said he has a son serving in the army in Cuba.

He finally slowed down enough to make me understand that he had lived through the Nazi occupation of Novgorod as a young child, and that many of his family had died. I began to realize he was harmless and walked with him, but he kept wanting to take me to the graveyard where his family members had been buried, and I needed to go back to the hotel to check out by noon – it was already 11:15. We stopped and sat on a bench for 5 minutes. He said he used to be a musician, and played the bayan (the small accordion). I took out my harmonica and played a tune. He wanted to buy my harmonica. I said no, that I really had to go, and that I'm not selling anything. He gave me a pin with a picture of a Soviet rocket ship on it. We shook hands and wished each other well, and I left.

I checked out, and wondered how I'd spend my day until 8:00 p.m., when I was scheduled to leave on the train. It was very overcast and cold by then and my leg and ankle are bothering me a little so I didn't feel like walking. I decided to watch T.V. up in the sitting room.

A movie was on about a woman who heads a collective farm and even though she could be quite bossy she is loved by everyone. She and some other women at one point get after a

guy who is always shirking his duties and going fishing. They all run after him and throw him in the lake.

It seemed that the main woman had given up love and a higher position in another area just to not let her people down, and to remain the head of the farm. It was a little corny and ended up with her running after the lazy worker again and grabbing his fishing pole and throwing it in the bushes. It had some sad parts, where they reminisced about the war and such.

After the show the sun was out again, so I went out walking again. I walked along the picturesque levee near the hotel. It's covered with soft green grass, with paths winding through it. It also curves around like the stream it borders, and through the trees one can see more onion-shaped domes of churches. I decided for the sake of my leg to walk over to the park and just sit in the sun. I bought an ice cream, took it to the park, and found a nice bench near a fountain to sit on and bask in the sun.

Each time a cloud covered the sun, I'd spend that time reading my new book "Mussa Jalil – Selected Poems," with the opposite page translation that I had mentioned before. Hard as it is to translate poetry, the poems don't sound too bad in English.

I got cold, so I went back to the hotel, and had a huge dinner for 3 rubles, sat down and read for about 2 hours, then watched the USSR/Danish soccer game on T.V. I watched for an hour, and the score was still 0 to 0. At about 7:30 a nice looking young woman and her four year old daughter arrived to transport me to the train station.

I thought it was so cool that she was able to bring her daughter with her. The child was happy and friendly. She said "Hi" in Russian to me, and I said "Hi" back. She smiled and chattered with her mother on our way there. Once we got to

the station, I told her that she didn't have to wait for me if she needed to go, that I could find my car on my own. She thanked me and left early.

Again I'm traveling in the soft sleeping car. By the time I got to my room on the train the Danish/USSR score was 1 to 0. I never heard the final score.

I was expecting another more well-to-do woman to join me in my room, since the last one was a scientist, and apparently most people don't want to spend the higher amount for these soft cars. (Actually I didn't choose the soft car, but without my knowledge first class accommodations were reserved for me by the travel agent.) Instead of a woman, however, a middle aged man in a uniform knocked on my door. He looked in and blushed, and said, "Excuse me, there must be some sort of mistake." He left, but in a short time he returned, smiling and blushing and said, "It looks like we're indeed compartment-mates."

I was lying on the bottom bunk, and told him I'd sleep up on the top one if he wanted, that it made no difference to me. "No," he insisted, he could handle the top bunk, and I was already situated. I didn't know quite what to think about having not just a male, but a policeman as a roommate.

He went out and changed into a jogging suit from his very impressive uniform. I asked, "Are you a policeman, or a soldier? The uniforms are very confusing to me." He laughed, and said, "I'm an officer in the Red Army! I'm a colonel!" (Actually, since he said the Russian word for colonel, I had no idea what it meant, until I asked someone later!) You would think confusing him for a cop would be a terrible insult to him. I apologized, but he didn't seem offended at all. Then we both started laughing. He asked, if I was not ready to sleep yet would it be O.K. if he sat on the bottom bunk at the table. I was not under the covers or anything and sat up, and said that would be fine. We began to have a very long conversation. He

was a very down to earth guy, not at all what you'd expect from an officer in the Red Army.

He, of course, asked me all about myself and America, and kept complimenting my use of Russian. He said he had studied English all through school, but couldn't speak it at all. His wife, he said, is an English teacher, and his eleven year old son is also studying English in the fifth grade. He asked me why my husband had agreed to let me go on this trip. I told him that he was in agreement with the reasons I came here.

He loved music, and when a song came on the radio that he liked, he would turn it up and sing with it. When I told him I would be going to Irkutsk, he sang a song about Lake Baikal. It was a pretty melody, and I pulled out my harmonica and played it while he sang. He was really impressed, and said I really had a good musical ear.

He gave me a magazine which had a long article about a recent film festival in which Robert Young of the USA had participated. ("Father Knows Best"?) He wanted me to read the article right then. Fortunately it was not too difficult to read, being mostly about the need for artists of different countries of the world to meet culturally like this and to speak of the need for peace and friendship between the world's people. I showed him my book of Mussa Jalil's poems. He immediately began speaking about Jalil's history. He knew all about him. He read some of the poem's aloud to me.

We had tea and wafers together and talked a little more. He climbed up on the top bunk and turned off the light so I could undress in privacy.

I slept well and thought in the morning it might be nice if his eleven year old son and mine corresponded. I brought it up. He didn't say no, but I got the definite impression he didn't go for the idea, even when I said I could translate

Tony's letters. I just let it drop, and we said goodbye at the Leningrad station. I felt a little hurt that he hadn't reacted favorably to my suggestion. Could it have been because he didn't want the bad influence of the West to reach his son through Tony? Or, maybe it's bad for a Red Army officer to have any letters from the West arriving at their home. Or, maybe he doesn't want his wife to know he shared his cabin with an American woman. I don't know. I found out later from Tracy, that it's very common for men and women who don't know each other to share cabins on trains, but very rare to put a Red Army Officer with an American.

SHORT STAY IN MOSCOW BEFORE MEETING MY GROUP IN LENINGRAD

September 26th – This morning was very complicated. I was met at the station by an Intourist guide, whose job it was to put me on a taxi and prepare to have me sent to the Metropol Hotel. It was only 6:00 a.m. I kept thinking it would be better if he sent me to Sevastopol, so as soon as the bank opened I could get my money changed, remove my luggage from the luggage check and get a taxi to Metropol Hotel later. I mentioned this to the Intourist man, but he said, “No, it’s too early. You’ll have to get your luggage later.” So I was dropped off at Metropol.

I sat there on the couch waiting with two other people for the service bureau to open at 9:00 a.m. One of them was from Iran. I spoke in Russian to a guard about leaving my bag here somewhere while I go to get my luggage. The Iranian, whose name, I found out later, is Rauf, heard me speaking Russian, and said, “Are you Russian?” I said, “No, American.” So he started speaking very broken English to me. He asked if I spoke Italian, because he said he spoke Italian really well. I told him no, so we carried on a conversation, part in English, and part in Russian, because he could barely speak either one of them. He said he spoke Italian because he had gone to a technical school on film technology in Italy for several years. He told me he had to handle everything in the next two days before the weekend, including getting a room in this hotel. He said he was going to Lumumba University this morning to try to find an Iranian student to help him out. I said I thought that was a pretty good idea. The other guy on the couch turned out to be an Australian, who was in transit to France to study aluminum technology at a special school there. He was sent by his company to acquire this expertise.

I finally decided to go by metro to the Sevastopol Hotel and just drag my bag along with me, since the clerk at Metropol

would not allow me to leave it there. I arrived there just in time for the bank to open. I changed money and went to the luggage check. The woman there was very friendly. She said, "Are you French?" I said (of course) "No, I'm American." She said, "Oh! Usually Americans don't speak Russian!" Then, in French, she asked me if I speak French. I told her I didn't. She said that was too bad, because she had studied many years of French and loves to practice speaking it.

She said my luggage was just too heavy to drag out front to a taxi. And actually, "out front" did mean the equivalent of a city block! She said she'd go get a taxi for me and have the driver come around back. She told me, meanwhile, to rest and watch T.V. She returned in a few minutes with a young man, Gannady, who works in the kitchen. She assured me, he's a very trustworthy comrade and he will drive me in his car and make sure my luggage gets to the Metropol safely. She said he'll charge the same as a taxi would have. I gave her a pair of nylons as a gift; she was very pleased and thanked me many times, once in French.

Gannady spoke very unclearly, but insisted in having a lengthy conversation with me. Luckily he was sympathetic to my inability to understand him; he repeated things over and over in different words and with examples so I'd get the point. I found out he's married, and has a two year old daughter. His wife is in management of the hotel restaurant. He's a baker of pastries in the restaurant but does not like being a baker. He wants to be an engineer in some field I couldn't make out, and in fact he's educated in that field, but for some reason cannot work in that specialty at this time. I asked him why, and he said something like, "In Socialist planning he is needed in one area and not the other at this time, and I agree with that policy, because right now, until more money can be put into non-military social needs, we must be content to make sure all people have work, eat, and have shelter and warmth."

He gave me examples of what people pay for rent, gas, and utilities. He said rent is like the price of a bottle of vodka, and other examples I can't remember.

He carried my heavy luggage about a block to the hotel, and wouldn't let me help, even though I'm bigger than he is. He wouldn't take more than 3 rubles from me. He was a very trustworthy comrade, just like the woman said.

I went right to the service bureau to see if my voucher problem was worked out yet. I soon found the person who was in charge of my problem. She said everything's O.K. with my vouchers, not to worry. She got me checked in and told me to come back tomorrow sometime to get my ticket to Leningrad for next week.

I called Paula and she got me the number of Raisa Andreevna, an English speaker with the Central Council of Trade Unions, who is in charge of the Working Women's Peace Exchange, the group I will be leading on a tour next month, whom I will be meeting soon in Leningrad. I called Ms. Andreevna and she won't be back until 4:00. I called one of my contacts, Richard Alibegov at his job, but whoever answered couldn't find him, and said he must be home sick today.

The sun keeps coming in and out of the clouds today. It's out right now, and the sky looks blue in a wide area around it, so I'm going swimming in the Moscow Pool. The pool is so great! It's huge, round, and I'd say its diameter is at least the length of a football field! It was full of people. The women at the front desk and the "dezhurnaya" in the locker room showed me what to do. When they saw I didn't have a cap, they provided me with a shower cap! The pool is like a warm bath, about 30° C (86° F). I swam all over. It's amazing how much easier it is to swim underwater when it's warm. And they must take it easy on the chlorine there, too: my eyes felt fine. By the time I had gotten out into the pool, however, it

had totally clouded over and the air was quite cold. I kept dipping my cold nose down into the warm water. When I got out, several people asked how I liked it. They all seemed very proud of their pool. I told them it was wonderful and I wasn't aware of anything quite like it in the U.S.

Also interesting was the totally unashamed attitude of the adolescent girls walking around nude in the shower and dressing rooms. They were there in groups of their friends. Some had really good figures, others were chubby, or very skinny and shapeless, and of varied ages; but all just sort of walked around here and there, or talked in groups, and seemed to take no interest or have judgment about their differences. That seems like a much healthier attitude than at home, where all I've ever experienced is extreme modesty by adolescent girls, especially among one another.

I got back to the hotel, and got in touch with Raisa, who is setting up a meeting with me and other interested parties of the Trade Union Council for October 1, the day before I leave for Leningrad. I am to call tomorrow for the time and place, or she'll try to call me.

I decided to check out the Bolshoi Theater since it's only 1½ blocks away from my hotel. I know tickets are always sold out, but sometimes people sell tickets they can't use outside the Theater. I looked around when I got there and soon realized there were many others also trying to get tickets. I finally found a man selling his extra tickets, but he was selling them for \$10 U.S., or heaven knows how many rubles. "Very expensive," he was saying. (I understand they are under half that much when purchased normally!) I told him he wasn't very nice to profit off the people that way. I continued to walk around looking for another way to buy a ticket, but ended up returning to him, and heard him speaking English with some American tourists. I walked up and said to them that I thought it was terrible to buy a bunch of tickets so others can't buy

them, and then sell them at a high price. One of the women tourists said, “Nonsense! They do that all over the world!” She was in a mink coat, and looked very disgusted with me. Then the ‘scalper’ said, “We like it!”

I felt like saying more, but I felt too intimidated, and decided to leave. It was an Estonian opera playing, that I had never heard of, anyway. But I still would have gone to it if the price had been right.

I ended up watching T.V. for the rest of the evening, out in the lounge with my Iranian friend, who, it turns out, is staying in the room next to me. He couldn’t find Lumumba University today, and will be going to the Intourist office tomorrow to find someone who speaks Italian to help him. It is so sweet here, to meet men over and over that simply treat me like another person, rather than flirting, and coming on to me. Here Rauf is in the room next to me, and didn’t even begin to flirt, or look me up and down, or say anything suggestive! I really find that cool!

September 27th – It was a gloomy, rainy day today. I had breakfast with Rauf. I went back to my room to call Vladimir Pozner at Radio Moscow, two other contacts, Alibegov, a translator and Popov, a man from the institute of U.S. and Canada, who speak English, and are supposed to be pretty interesting fellows.

I also planned to call Paula, who is supposed to be coming downtown today, so we could plan where to meet, and Tracy, who wanted me to call as soon as I returned to Moscow, to give her my phone number. I contacted Paula, and she’s unable to come downtown after all today, so she said I should come visit her tonight or tomorrow after 8 o’clock to pick up a gift for another contact, Popov, that one of her American visitors left for him.

I called the others. I reached Popov’s secretary, who

speaks English, and took a message for him to call me. He's supposed to return at 2:00 p.m. Alibegov is still home sick. No answer at Pozner's desk at *Moscow Radio*. No answer at Tracy's.

I looked over my list and thought, well, if I handled my Russian OK with the scientist, and the Army Officer, I can probably do OK with some of my non-English speaking contacts. So I called Riurikov, one of the contacts my American friend Bill gave me. He was there, and seemed very happy to hear from a friend of Bill's, and invited me over whenever I could make it. I figured that tomorrow evening would be best, because I'd planned to go to Paula's tonight, but he said tonight would be better for him because he'd like me to meet his daughter and she was going out of town for the weekend. So I said OK, and he gave me directions to his house, and I'm going at 8:00 p.m.

I cancelled with Paula, and was able to contact Lili Golden's daughter, Helen. Lili and her daughter are both friends of Paula, and Helen now works for *Moscow News*. She was extremely excited to hear from me. She said that Lili is now on vacation, but will return tomorrow night and I should call either Saturday at 10:00 p.m. or Sunday morning. Helen said she wants to write an article about my "Working Women's Peace Exchange" group.

Raisa Andreevna won't have arrangements made to meet with me until Monday morning, which is getting awfully late! I hope I'll get to meet with her before I leave for Leningrad.

How nice! The sun just peeked out for the first time today and shined through my window, at the same time that a really pretty song violinists must play to graduate from book two of the Suzuki Violin School (in the U.S.) just started playing on the radio. I can't remember the name of it. My daughter, Erin, never got that far in the Suzuki School, but always loved that particular piece.

Well, it's 4:00 p.m. I probably should leave for Riurikov's at 7:00. I decided to put in a call for Edward, my contact in Leningrad, since I'll be there to meet my group so soon now. I want to make sure to visit him. The call is for 6:00 p.m.

I'm hungry, but I don't want to buy dinner, because I'm sure the Riurikovs will want to feed me something. What a surprise! I found a handful of pumpkin seeds, given to me by the dezurnaya back in Krasnodar, in the pocket of my light jacket. I'd forgotten all about that! A perfect snack! Just as nice as last night's snack – nuts from a tree in the winery near Novorossiysk, shaken down by Victor, one of the workers there who let me take his picture. I had kept the nuts in my suitcase until last night. Ah! Wonderful, my tea arrived! A pot of tea brought to my room for 20 kopecks!

I forgot to mention, I went to G.U.M. (the State Moscow State Department Store) today. It's only 3 minutes from my hotel. What a madhouse!! It's like an indoor shopping mall. If not covered with a glass roof, it would be like a three-story-tall outside shopping center. There were long lines in front of the record store, and another place where there was a mob of young people pushing towards the counter and a long line behind that. When somebody bought something, it was next to impossible for her or him to get out through the crowd gathered around the counter. I asked a woman standing by me what they were selling there. She said they were Disco outfits from India! I bought a writing tablet for 44 kopeks from a shop with no lines and left.

Well, my call never came in from Leningrad, but I got a call from Popov. He also was happy to hear from a friend of Bill's. He set up an appointment with me for Tuesday morning.

What a wonderful evening I had with Riurikov, his two daughters, Svyetik and Olya, and his niece Anya. Anya and Svyetik fixed us all supper. (They were young, not more than

twelve years old.) We had meat patties, fried potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, bread, mineral water, and a Siberian liquor made from grass, called "Altaysky Balzam." For dessert we had tea and delicious pastries. Yuri's wife, Rita, is on a holiday in the Crimea.

Before dinner we talked about Bill, our common friend, and how we had come to know him. Yuri brought out his copy of "Soviet Women," one of the books Bill had written. I asked if he knew about Bill's new book. He said he had but hadn't gotten a copy yet.

I told Yuri, "From what Bill has told me, you're involved with people practicing different methods of education." I asked what that was all about. Yuri gave me a book to read by Nikitin, the founder of this method of education. He showed me his daughter's room. She has a large bedroom with gymnastic equipment built into it, and actually attached to her bed. He told me she has been using this equipment since she was very small, and that he, of course, built it.

He said that the educational technique has a lot to do with physical as well as mental development. Physically it's based greatly on strength and ability to endure cold. Children in the book are pictured sitting in the snow close to naked. They believe health depends on enduring cold. These kids all look so happy! Not at all cold or uncomfortable! With this kind of training, Yuri says, children's minds develop more rapidly because they are so strong and never sick. They normally are finished with secondary school by the time they are twelve or thirteen.

I asked him if the government is favorable to this technique or if they hinder the development of it. He said there have been struggles in the past but now apparently they do not prevent or hinder the practice of this type of education. But Nikitin wants it to spread and become a general type of education everywhere, and there's where the difficulty lies.

Acceptance of it by the general public, I think, would be difficult, because people here are mostly a little too protective of their children, and bundle them up a little too much. Even when the weather is not very cold, you see babies and small children with many layers of clothing on. They look like little stuffed toys!

I mentioned this to Yuri, and he agreed that is a big part of the problem. I must admit, I'd be hesitant to accept such an extreme program for my kids, but it does seem very interesting, and I'm going to try to read the book he gave me, or at least part of it before I return to Moscow on the 18th of October. Also Yuri said he will try to get a special meeting set up with Nikitin himself, to make a presentation to my group at the end of October.

Needless to say, I had a really nice evening. They asked me lots of questions about the U.S. First Olya, then Svyetik, and on and on. It got quite complicated for me answering these questions, and during an attempt to make a couple of points, Svyetik couldn't control herself, and had to laugh at me. I think I said something wrong that came out like a joke. She tried hard not to laugh and covered her face but could not hold back. Without any translators around there was no way for me to figure out what I had said wrong.

I took a number of Polaroid pictures of us, and gave a few to them. Yuri packed up some fruit and pastries and a bouquet of flowers for me. He insisted on accompanying me to the Metro.

We talked about exercise, jogging and Yoga on the way there. He said he used to practice Yoga a lot and he feels it saved his life about 10 years ago when, he said, he had almost died. He didn't go into detail, but now, he said, he doesn't do it anymore, although he knows he should.

September 29th – I ate breakfast this morning with Rauf

and Jane, a New Yorker, who just spent a year in Hong Kong, and is in Moscow for four days prior to her return to the U.S. She seemed to have a very bad ethnocentric view of different countries. You'd think, coming from New York, she'd be more accepting of other cultures, and less sold on the view that the U.S. is the be all and end all, but she went on and on with her prejudices against the Chinese, and others, and even after living with the Chinese for a year her stereotypes of them remained. She's very impressed, so far, by the Soviet Union, however, and has already visited several cities here, including Irkutsk. She was expecting the situation described by her twin sister, who had visited the Soviet Union in the early 1970's, and had said she felt followed, couldn't go anywhere separate from her tour without a lot of red tape, and was sure her room was bugged. Jane feels no such restrictions here. She's not happy with service here, but doesn't seem to worry much about it.

I called Yuri Riurikov, because I'd forgotten to give him my phone number. He asked if I was doing anything, and if not could I have lunch at his house. I'll be going to Paula's tonight and meeting an Abkhazian friend of hers who speaks fluent English. So I told Yuri I could come there for lunch as long as I left for Paula's at about 6:00 p.m. He said that would work, and invited me to come over at 3:00.

We had lunch and talked some more about America. He played records for me, folk music sung by a famous Soviet woman folk singer, and then some instrumental pieces of familiar Russian tunes. Then he started asking me about U.S. family life, about marriage, love, sex education and such. I began to realize he was the man Bill had told me about who had studied and written about the "history of love." It was his field as a psychologist and writer.

If any other man had wanted to speak to me on that subject, with just the two of us in his home or apartment, I

would have considered it just a flirtation technique, but he seemed so completely clinical about it all, and Bill had told me about him, so I trusted him and told what I know about such things in the U.S. As I was talking, though, I realized there's a lot I just don't know about other people. I told him I felt there was too much pornography in the U.S. and that, I think, causes men to have a warped view of women. I told him that my children had had sex education in school, but also that I told them a lot at home. It was a difficult subject for me to discuss in Russian; I just didn't have the vocabulary. Also when stumbling around for words in a subject such as sex and love, I felt a hesitancy to say certain things, for fear the words might come out either really funny, or very misleading.

Anyway, the afternoon was very interesting, and I reached Paula's in plenty of time, since her guest didn't arrive until about 9:30. Meanwhile she had contacted another local Abkhazian man who is a student researching his people, and writing a thesis here in Moscow.

We had a tasty dinner, and an enjoyable conversation. It turned out that Fadel, the other Abkhazian, was living in Syria, spoke Turkish and Arabic as well as English and Abkhazian. In fact, he was a translator who had translated volumes of Turkish literature into Arabic. He is now working on a translation of the "Nark" tales – ancient Abkhazian tales on which the entire ethical and moral makeup of the Abkhazian community is based – into English. Many of these tales are already published in Russian. This subject is very interesting to Paula, also an anthropologist, who wrote a book on the subject of the longevity of the Abkhazian people.

Her two Abkhazian guests also spoke of the different Abkhazian colonies outside of the Soviet Union. In the U.S., for example, there is a settlement of 20 or so families in New Jersey, and in West Germany, 2,000 or so are living in a settlement, and there are other settlements in Turkey. Paula is

toying with the idea of a new study on a comparison of the reaction of urban Abkhazian youth in these different areas – what ethics and customs still remain, etc.

I got back to the hotel at 1:00 am. Thank God daylight savings time ended today, so we gain an hour.

September 30th – I ate breakfast with Rauf again, and also an American Russian sat at our table. She was an old ‘Russian Aristocrat’ who had lived in the U.S. for 40 years. No service was good enough for her. She spoke English and Russian. When I heard her speak English to the waitress, I said, “I see you speak English as well as Russian.” She said, “I speak German too, I’ve lived 40 years in the U.S., and I have no time to speak to you!” (Real sweet lady!) She muttered and complained for all the rest of breakfast to herself. She said one more thing to me – some question in English I couldn’t understand. I said, “What?” And she muttered, “Oh, never mind!”

It was not a very pleasant breakfast. Boy, people like her gripe me. I don’t know what she’s accustomed to, but this café, at which I’ve eaten three mornings now, has very good service; all the waiters are bilingual or trilingual (English, Russian, German). I’ve never sat there for more than a half hour for the entire breakfast including tea. The eggs are always hot, the waiters and waitresses always friendly. The minute this aristocrat sat down she wanted her coffee. It didn’t get there for about 5 minutes, but the place was very busy! Her servants back home are probably much more efficient.

If this café irritated her, she must have heart failure at other cafes, because in the Soviet Union, generally I’ve found service is slow, and servers are not pleasant. I think the people just feel like, “Heck with it. I won’t lose my job if I’m slow or in a bad mood, so why sweat it!” Also, no tipping, I suppose, makes a difference. But to me, I’m in no hurry and happy to talk to whoever is sitting near me. I’d probably be irked if I

had to sit an hour and a half or so, but in the worst cases I've never spent over an hour at any one meal.

I went to visit Lili Golden and her daughter Helen today. What wonderful people they are. Lili is a woman who was on my contact list from Bill. She has a very interesting history. She's a Black woman, born and raised in Tashkent, where her father, a Black man from New York, and her mother, a Jewish American, settled in the 1930's to assist their cotton industry. This had been a time when many Americans came to the USSR to escape the horrors of the US depression. Lili is now a researcher in the African Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and her daughter Helen, as I have mentioned, is a journalist with *Moscow News*. Both speak perfect English.

Lili just returned from two months in the Caucasus Mountains. What a vacation that must have been! Helen had to run off to work, but she wants to interview me for *Moscow News* before I leave for Leningrad. Lili and I talked all morning. She showed me pictures of her trip. She gave me one to bring to her cousin in Los Angeles sometime. (I actually hardly ever go to L.A., and haven't been there in years, but I'll probably take the trip just to meet her cousin.) I said I'd mail it, but she said, "No, there's no hurry but I want you to meet her. Her name is Pearl Steinhart and her son is a famous violinist."

Lili and I talked a lot about her experiences greeting and hosting American "Citizen Diplomats" here. She said recently she hosted a group of doctors. Two of the women got very emotional over some things Lili said. They had been insisting that the Soviet people must pressure their government to stop the arms race. Lili kept saying that she and everyone she knows think their government's proposals are right, and she can't think of how they can be improved, so why pressure them? for what?

One women doctor started crying and left the room,

another then also started crying. Lili went in the other room to comfort the first crying doctor, and asked, “What did I say?” The woman was trembling and said she just feels so bad that Soviet people can’t protest. But Lili kept saying, “But I don’t want to protest!” So the woman said, “But you have no freedom!” So Lili asked, “What freedom do you have?”

Apparently at this point, one of the doctors, a Jewish woman, joined in and said she appreciated the U.S. very much for taking her in after the war, and she was very happy there.

Lili asked, “But aren’t there fascists freely living and voicing their opinions in the U.S.?” The woman said, “Yes”. “Well I don’t want such freedom here!” Lili said, “My father and mother came here to escape the freedom of the Ku Klux Klan to operate in the U.S. I’m glad those people aren’t allowed such freedom here.” And so the argument went.

It’s hard, I guess, for many Americans to believe that there are many Soviet people who feel like Lili does on this subject. But for some other Americans, I think her opinions would be completely understandable.

After leaving Lili’s, I spent all afternoon reading news and studying Russian. This evening, I’m writing and reading while I listen to excerpts from famous operas on the radio. They are all operas and arias I know and like. It’s interesting to hear them sung in Russian. So far they’ve all been Italian operas. I’ve recognized so far: “Barber of Seville,” “Pagliacci,” “Faust” (I guess that’s French). I think they’re singing in Russian. They keep saying “Yugoslavia” over and over in between songs, so maybe it’s Yugoslavian they’re singing in. Singing fools me: I really can’t understand all the words, though it does sound like Russian.

Lots of the languages of Eastern Europe and Russian sound similar, like the Bulgarians I heard talking a few days ago – I spoke to them in Russian, and they understood me,

and I understood them as well as I would understand Russian speakers.

O.K., the program just ended. It was a Bolshoi Theater production called "Spectacular Meeting." It was really good, except, I must admit, my son, Steven, is a better tenor than any I heard tonight. Not bragging; just fact!

September 30th – I had a delicious breakfast of jam-filled crispy crepes! Only one problem, not enough of them! I met a nice Australian couple at breakfast on their way to spend two months in Rome. They were disgusted at the way the Australians and British they have met on their tour so far have been so rude, constantly demanding answers to accusing questions. They don't think any peoples of the world would be so impolite if they were visitors to Britain, Australia, or the U.S.

Fadel, my Abkhazian friend from Paula's, brought me an umbrella. I had left mine in the taxi we both took the night before last, and thinking he may have seen it and picked it up for me, I had called him this morning. He hadn't seen mine, but he and a friend had business near my hotel this morning, so they dropped off a dilapidated umbrella for me, that I can keep. It's better than nothing, for sure.

I have a message in for Alibegov to call me today. Tomorrow I meet with Raisa Andreevna at the Council of Trade Unions at 3:00 p.m. At 10:00 a.m. I meet with Popov.

Today I have no plans, but I think I'll call Holly this afternoon, since I haven't gotten to meet her yet. It's interesting to talk to the American translators living here in Moscow, to just see how their lives are going.

Great! Richard Alibegov finally returned my call. We will meet tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. So I'm very busy tomorrow, but today I have nothing but time.

I called Holly. No answer. I called Tracy. She will let me

know tonight whether or not I will be able to see her husband Zhora's performance on Wednesday.

I really would like to go out for a while, but it's really rainy and cold! I tried Holly again, and she was home! We set up a meeting for Wednesday during the day.

I finally got a hold of Vladimir Mshvyeneradzeh's secretary. He's a Georgian living in Moscow, whom Bill referred me to. His secretary took a message and said he'll return at 2:00 and call me back. He speaks English, according to Bill.

Well, I got a lot of reading done this afternoon. I find I know enough Russian to understand the main idea of the "Nikitin" book. It poured rain all afternoon, so it was just as well I stayed in waiting for a phone call.

I finally got the call at about 8:00! I had basically given up, and then the phone rang. It was Mshvyeneradzeh, and he spoke perfect English! He didn't remember Bill at all! But he said he'd be happy to help me out anyway. What could he do for me? He asked.

Wow! I didn't know what to answer. It turned out he's not just your ordinary "Georgian living in Moscow," but a Professor of Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science and also the Chairman of the Soviet Sociological Association, and apparently serves on many other important boards and committees.

Finally after a lengthy discussion about the group of women workers joining me in Leningrad and the aims of our "Working Women's Peace Exchange," he asked whether we would like to meet with a group of English-speaking women philosophers, who work in his department? I said that I think that would work just fine. So I'm to contact him when we return to Moscow on October 19th.

I'm also going to speak with the council of Trade Unions

to see if they can consolidate these arrangements while I'm gone.

October 1st – I met with Nikolai Popov this morning. What a delightful individual he is! We had a long talk about him, and about me. He also is going to try to get a group of women from his department, the Institute of U.S.A. and Canada, to meet with us when we visit Moscow from October 19th through 23rd.

I bought an imitation fur hat for 9 rubles. It's very sunny today, but very cold. People are saying it very well could start snowing early this year. I looked at the real fur hats. They were expensive; 50 rubles and up!

It's so pleasant in my room today. I ordered borsch and tea for my room, as I've been doing every day for lunch. (I also keep a sandwich from breakfast's left-over bread and cheese.) A really thick borsch and a pot of tea with milk, brought to my room is 90 kopecks. They always accept my small tips, even though they're not supposed to. So I'm sitting here eating my lunch with the radio playing, my windows open, and the sun going in and out of the clouds. It will get quite cool for a while, and then really warm a few minutes later, etc. But the air seems so fresh I just keep the windows open.

I met with Irena and Raisa from the council of Trade Unions, tour section, today. It looks like they've arranged a very nice tour for us: visits to factories, meeting with minority women and other workers; seeing schools, pioneer palaces, a trade school, plus museums and all. It doesn't look like I'll be able to fit much extra in, in Moscow. I hope the women will be satisfied and things go smoothly.

Where can I possibly start in telling about tonight's adventure?!! At the beginning, I suppose. I met Richard Alibegov at 7:30. He laughed at me for wearing a Russian fur hat, and said that nobody wears those yet, not until the

weather is cold! I'm already cold, 4° C (40° F) is quite cold to me, but I took off my hat because I was embarrassed. Actually it wasn't bad: dry and not windy. We went from restaurant to restaurant. They were either full or playing rock and roll too loud for us to talk. Finally we found the "Actor's Club." He got us in. When we entered we discovered his friends Sergei and Valentina were dining there. They both spoke fluent English, and after Richard and Sergei's initial kisses and hugs, we joined them.

I had a fish dinner – carp. Carp is commonly eaten here and not considered a "lesser variety," as in the U.S. It was prepared quite well; the meal was delicious. The three of them drank a lot more than I could ever have handled, but although this drinking continued all evening, the conversation remained totally logical and understandable.

What an interesting conversation we had. As soon as we



My meeting with Irina and Raisa, Council of Trade Unions, to plan our tours, in Moscow. Raisa is holding two of the gifts given by my group for the kids at one of the schools

sat down at the table and the fact that I'm American was pointed out by Richard, the discussion centered around the inadequacy of the Soviet System: the long lines, the bad distribution of food, the constant deluge of propaganda such as, "...the great heroic Soviet People in their struggle to persevere against external enemies are willing to sacrifice..." and so on.

They complained that all the new liquor laws (passed to try to cut down on alcoholism) had done is make people line up longer for liquor – four hours or more now – and the only liquor that is available now in restaurants is the more expensive kind, like cognac and whiskey, instead of Vodka.

We went to Sergei's apartment. It was a beautifully furnished room, about 15 feet by 20 feet. It had high ceilings, luxurious draperies, and high quality antique furniture, and carpet. It was extremely plush for a front room, but it is his only private room. He shares a kitchen and bathroom with a neighbor. He made it clear, he considers it totally inadequate. He brought out ancient original documents signed by Empress Anna, Catherine the Great, Peter the Great, and others. Apparently his family had been nobility, and these documents were handed down to him. He showed me his family tree, which I really couldn't understand. He said he's against Socialism and for Capitalism. This started one of the heated arguments that kept taking place throughout the evening. (And remember they had really been drinking!). Valentina just mostly sat there and said nothing.

Richard would say, "O.K., so what about monopolies? Are you for that?"

Sergei: "Well, no, but I'm for capitalism!"

Richard: "So what are you going to do to prevent monopolies?"

Sergei: "I don't know; I just know capitalism is better."

Richard: "I just hate it when people complain like this but haven't thought their ideas out to their logical conclusions! So what do you want, Sergei, capitalism in the Soviet Union?"

Sergei: "It can't be done – it's too late," and so on.

I ask, "Well since you are both against the system here, what are your basic criticisms and ideas of what to do?"

Richard says, "I'm not against socialism! You just have to see its development in the Soviet Union in the proper context!"

Then he gives a long statement about how difficult it was for socialism to come to a country where the vast majority of people had a slavery mentality and capitalism was not yet developed. As Richard was speaking, Sergei interrupted over and over saying things like: "Don't be naïve, Rich!!" "You're just a dupe of communist propaganda, Rich!!" And so on... Then a new argument would interrupt Richard's explanation.

All in all the gist of what Richard seemed to be saying was that socialism needs democracy to work correctly, and too many with "slave mentality," even today, cause no end to problems in the Soviet Union. Another problem seemingly tied in with the first one, he said, is the stupidity of planning by officials that is not opposed by the 'slavish' types, such as: huge factories, and collective farms being constructed everywhere, but no good roads built in order to distribute the products. He said things are getting a little better, but told of an example of when Khrushchev was leader. He was present at the opening ceremony of a plant in a certain far-out area. When he was asked how they would transport the products efficiently with the terrible roads there, he had said, "You'll just have to do the best you can, because we just don't have the money for roads now."

Richard spoke of how the grain problem is now largely overcome because the road problem doesn't affect its

transport as much as that of fruit and vegetables. That's why, he said, fruit and vegetables in the South are good, but it's so hard to transport them in good condition to Moscow that people here basically have to rely mainly on cabbage, cucumbers, carrots, beets, onions, meat and potatoes, and bread for nutrition. Other things are available at times, but the transportation problems really slow down distribution. He said, for example, peaches, melons, cherries, tomatoes, and such, simply get smashed traveling on bumpy roads.

I said, "Why not transport by air?"

Richard laughed. "Everyone wants to fly!! The planes are crowded with people. Most all the airplane technology is going toward transporting people. If they live in the Ukraine, they must go to Sakhalin for their holiday, or vice versa. Everyone wants to fly far away for vacations. And regardless of our 'lack of freedom,' everyone can afford to fly, and chooses to!" Hmmm, somewhat different in the USA!!

I can't remember how the subject changed to Afghanistan, but Rich and Sergei are definitely in disagreement there.

Rich: "I plan to go to Afghanistan and help in some way. Why do people oppose the Afghan government? All they are doing is good for the people. A literary campaign goes on there; women are being liberated and educated. Look at the people in Alma Ata and other Soviet Central Asian republics, they are healthy, happy, working, not fighting. They're educated. Women are educated as well. They threw off their veils long ago. They were not unlike the backward people of Afghanistan before their revolutions."

Sergei: "So Soviet troops should force that down their throats! Right?"

Rich: "That's not the point! The same type of bandits or "contras" that cross the borders and fight against the revolution did the same during the Soviet Central Asian

revolutions. What are we to let them do? Turn Afghanistan into a Pakistan?”

Sergei: “You don’t know anything at all about Pakistan! How can you speak about something you know nothing about? Have you been there?”

Then began the argument that popped up over and over all night. Richard, who’s Georgian, accusing Sergei of “Russian snobbery;” in other words, he knows the truth supposedly simply because he’s Russian, but Rich must actually have firsthand experience to be believed.

Then Sergei would once again accuse Rich of being naïve, and brainwashed by Soviet propaganda.

“I was at a conference last year,” Sergei said, “which included many religious delegates. One of the delegates was a Mullah from Afghanistan. When he spoke, several of us felt like he was being mistranslated purposefully because whenever he said the word for bandit in the Afghan language, it would be translated with the word for bandit, in the Uzbek language, so as to rile up people who could see the latter bandit as a clear enemy.”

“So what?” replied Rich, “They’re the same type of bandit!! I don’t think they were mistranslating. You and I are translators. Remember when we were accused by a Canadian of mistranslating at a peace conference? It can’t be done. It’s too difficult in a word for word translation process.”

“Maybe for us,” says Sergei, “but this translator was probably a specially trained propagandist. You are so naïve!!”

And so the argument went. As the evening went on, Sergei and Rich always had complete agreement that the internal workings of the Soviet Union are all fouled up, but Rich would always end up saying, “You must understand why, in the overall context!” Whereas Sergei would always end up saying, “Socialism is no good!!”

Rich told of an “excellent” book he had just translated that will be out soon from *Progress Publishers* named something like “I Now Apply for Housing,” about the housing situation in the Soviet Union. He said there are lots of problems, but we’ve come a long way.

Rich argued that as far as most of the internal problems go, people had a lot of faith in Gorbachev at first, but he’s such a gabby individual. He talks, talks, talks all the time. Now we are just watching to see if he’ll really carry through meaningful reform.

When the subject of the arms race came up, however, all three, including Valentina agreed that the U.S. is at fault, because some Americans get very rich from the arms buildup, and then the Soviet Union is forced to follow suit.

“And look how our system suffers from having to divert our money to armaments,” Valentina said.

They asked me lots of questions about America. I told them personal examples of my family, and my struggle to get the money together for this trip. I commented that most people I know are quite a lot in debt, and that it’s a *must* to borrow money, where I live, to have anywhere near an adequate standard of living.

“Yes,” Valentina said, “but at least the possibility is there for you to get money together and to travel here. For us no such possibility exists to visit your country.”

We discussed lines, and I was surprised to hear that in their supermarkets, if a person has to be in line for over 25 minutes, you can be sure there will be complaints to management, and demands that other check-out stations be opened. Richard said that the usual grocery line wait is about 20 minutes during busy times.

“My experiences at home, at Raley’s is similar,” I told them, “about 20 minutes in line. But then I’m only speaking

of where I live; in the rest of the country, I don't know."

Sergei joined in, "Yes, but look what you get to buy – good quality fruits and vegetables that we never see!!

I had to agree. We do have beautiful and delicious produce all year round.

Sergei served some delicious Jasmine tea to me and they laughed at me as they drank cherry liqueur, instead. I tried a little, but *cherry liqueur!!* The three of them went through practically the whole bottle. If I had joined them, I would have been visiting my dinner a second time.

We took turns taking pictures with my Polaroid camera. I really enjoyed the evening. On the way home, Richard continued a conversation we had started at Sergei's place about how he used to not even want to meet Americans because he thought they were hopelessly naïve, ill-informed and brainwashed. But he became very interested in Americans during the "New Left" period in the 1960's and 1970's. He had met a few Americans then and began to read American New Left periodicals. Then his whole idea about us changed, and he decided we were the hope of the future. He felt like a revolution could happen in America that could possibly lead to a more enlightened socialism.

When it didn't happen he was disappointed, needless to say. I will be calling him when I get back to Moscow on the 19th. I think he will be a very interesting person for some of my group to meet.

October 3rd – Helen Hanga, Lili Golden's daughter, interviewed me today for *Moscow News*, and will interview me and others of my group upon our return to Moscow, after our tour. The combination of interviews will be published and she'll send me a copy. Also she agreed to keep the balalaika (I bought for 8 rubles) at her apartment while I'm away with my group and that I'll pick it up when we return to Moscow.

It's a very rainy, dismal day today. I went to the Central Lenin Museum and spent about four hours there, just to take it easy and stay out of the rain. It was interesting and informative. I noticed only one picture of Trotsky in a group picture with Lenin. His name was not mentioned there or anywhere in the museum. I must say, I'm glad the theories of Trotsky were thrown out, because I think, with my limited knowledge of the subject, that the Soviet Union would not have a policy of peaceful coexistence, as I'm convinced they have today, if Trotsky's theories of the necessity of world socialist revolution, that is, all or nothing at all, had won out. But it seems wrong not to tell about him, because he was a very important leader of their revolution. Maybe they fear Soviet people might rally behind his ideas if they tell about him. I don't know. It just seems strange to keep his name out of the history at this museum, and shows maybe a lack of faith in Soviet people that I'm sure is not necessary.

After the museum, I went to the play "Byeg" which Tracy's husband Zhora was in. He got me a special seat. I had to leave early to catch my train to Leningrad, so he had the



Helen Hanga and I in Moscow

whole thing planned. The only thing was – he was in a great hurry. He was a little late to begin with, and had to explain how he was going to get me this special seat via his friend (one of the ushers), tell me where to meet him after the first act for a tour of backstage, show me where I was to exit when I left early, etc., all in about 2 minutes while he's leading me here and there, taking my coat, hat, etc. He speaks a little fast anyway, but this time it was almost impossible for me to understand. And I couldn't really ask questions because I needed time to form my questions and sentences that we just didn't have. So I just went with the flow and probably seemed like a very sweet, smiling, retarded person.

The usher snuck me into a very good seat. I understood quite a lot of what I saw of the play, although I'd like to read about it later to get the details. The best translation of "Byeg" would probably be "Escape." It was about the Soviet Union during the revolution or perhaps right after, when aristocrats and clergy were trying to get out of the country to a safe place, and were relying on the White Guard, or counter-revolutionaries to get Russia back for them.

So during intermission, Zhora met me at the predetermined place and took me on a "running" tour of backstage. He showed me the stage, the dressing rooms, the rest areas, etc., then he gave me my things, kissed me quickly, wished me well, and off I went. By the way, he played one of the clergy, a very dramatic part, and I felt he was doing an excellent acting job. Too bad I couldn't stay.

I got to the train in plenty of time. While I was waiting, two country "babas" (as they called themselves) latched on to me. I could only understand one of them. She spoke with a Ukrainian accent. She was really nice to me. She admired my suitcase and after we conversed for a while; she said she was surprised I was not from what she called "the American intelligentsia," because she thought no other Americans could

travel to the USSR. I told her it was more difficult for some people to raise the money, but if you can pay, and get a passport and visa, you can travel abroad, and plus, I as a tour leader got most of my way paid.

The ladies helped me find my train, which was switched at the last minute to a different track. They smiled huge smiles, showing mouthfuls of gold teeth, and wished me well. I wished them well too, and went into my car. They were on their way to Murmansk.

Our car was full of a group of Americans. I was to share a room with a fourteen year old Bulgarian girl, but her father was concerned that he was given the car next to her, and wanted to switch with me. I agreed, and became the compartment-mate of an American businessman. He was a likeable sort and invited five others into the room to talk with me for a while. I explained what I was doing here. Some of them were quite receptive to my ideas, but he and one of the women were very skeptical of me, and considered me one of the starry-eyed Americans, brainwashed by Soviet propaganda. But truthfully, I think they are the kind of people who consider anyone who wants peace and friendship between our two countries brainwashed, and basically are the type who feel we simply cannot allow the USSR to occupy the same planet as we do. Of course they don't want war; they just wish the Soviet Union would disappear.

Like others I've met, they don't come to the Soviet Union to learn, but merely to document their prejudices, and are blind to anything positive. Anyway, they all finally left to the dining car to party, and I was able to get some sleep.

October 4th – In the morning I got acquainted with the Bulgarian man and his daughter. He speaks Russian, and was interested in hearing about my 'American Women's' group. He is from Sophia, and a journalist who writes for the Trade Union paper *Trud*, or *Labor*. His daughter was fourteen, and a

ballet dancer. He asked me to write him about how my tour went, after I return to the States. He said he'll print it and send me a copy of the paper. We exchanged addresses. He told me I could write him in English if I want, because although he can't speak English, he reads it pretty well.

TO LENINGRAD TO MEET UP WITH MY WOMEN'S GROUP

Everything was all confused at the train station in Leningrad. The Intourist guide was there for the other groups and not me. She did, at least, help me by bringing my luggage with the others' out to the street, and getting me a cab, but I had to pay the 2 ruble taxi fare.

I got here to the Gaven Hotel, where there were supposed to be some English speakers. I could find none, so I had to again handle the arrangements in Russian. They did know about my group, however, and that I was arriving early, so I got my room. But although breakfast usually comes with the room you had the night before, I had to buy my own for 1 ruble, 50 kopecks.

I sure do have a nice room, though, with a color TV!! I took a hot bath in orange water. I called it my "mineral" bath. The only thing is, it's a single room, and I want to have a roommate. In fact, Earledean, one of my long-time friends, who was able to come on the trip, and I, had decided long ago to be roommates, so maybe I can give this room to Nan, who wanted a room alone.

I watched a film today which I feel the need to comment on. It was about a very strong woman as main character, who has a family and is the Mayor of a Soviet city. The film starts in a very gruesome way. One of her sons is playing with a gun—she also has guns and is an award-winning markswoman—and it accidentally goes off and he kills himself. Then the film has a long flashback about her first meeting her husband, and the first child being born (who is the one who killed himself). Then it gets to the present and she is very depressed over her son's death, and the announcement on T.V. of the death of Salvador Allende of Chile further depresses her.

Somehow she is able to force herself to focus entirely headlong on her job to get her mind off her sorrows. She struggles at one point with her city council to try to get a school – or possibly it was a pioneer palace – repaired. A crack had developed diagonally from way up on the top floor to the ground level. The majority of the council didn't want to do anything about it at that time. They said things like, "It's been standing for 100 years, and will stand 6 months more."

The Mayor argued about it, saying that it should be fixed now because of the danger involved, and if a collapse occurred, it would be on all of their consciences. Earlier there had been a scene of a bunch of kids dancing on the top floor of this building. She also had to argue the point with her husband, and even left him for a while over it.

She also was struggling with the city council over the lack of goods and supplies, that people in the school had so many needs that just aren't being fulfilled, and that something must be done.

At the end she comes home and it's never clear if any of the problems get solved, but she is put forward as a strong individual who thinks for herself and won't sit still until she gets these problems solved.

One interesting thing about this film was that it had Russian subtitles along with Russian language being spoken. I thought it was great, because I can read Russian better than I understand spoken Russian. But I couldn't understand why both were in Russian. Also, whenever a phone rang or there was a knock on the door, the subtitle would read "bell rings," or, "knock on door." I kept thinking to myself, "Why do they say that?" Obviously the phone is ringing, etc. All at once it hit me. This film is being subtitled for the deaf! I should have realized that at once, since it is very common on Soviet T.V. news and informational programs to have a small square in the corner of the screen with a person signing for the deaf.

I also saw a program on nature study in Estonia, in which were shown little orange and white striped wild baby pigs! At least they looked like pigs. I've never seen or heard of such animals. They looked like furry orange and white watermelons with little feet and snouts.

My interpreter finally arrived and I accompanied her to the airport to meet my group. She's a really nice, very young looking, thirty-one year old woman named Lyudmilla, or Lyuda for short. She was so happy I spoke a little Russian that she spoke no English to me until my friends arrived. That was difficult, because as usual, I couldn't understand her too well, and she had a lot to say!

Most everyone made it! but not my son, Steve, unfortunately! There had been a question as to how many were to actually be able to make the trip, and my twenty-four year old son might have been coming too, despite the fact that otherwise it was all women.



Anamaria and I getting settled
in Leningrad

It was really exciting to meet them all! In fact a couple of extra women had added on since I left, and I hadn't even met them until now. Everyone had a smooth pass through customs, nothing like the problems I had.

My best friend, Anamaria, made it! I was so happy! I was sure she wasn't going to be able to work it out. What a surprise! Everyone seems to be in good spirits. It looks like Earldean and I

won't get to be roommates after all, however, because in pairing people up, it just worked out better that I room with Colleen for now.

During dinner this evening a band played. Exhausted as everyone was, some still stayed up late with me and we danced. It's pretty common everywhere I've been in the Soviet Union to see women dancing together or in groups to the fast songs.

October 5th – We went on a city tour and to a pioneer palace today.

We were shown their dancing class, and to our surprise young boys walked up to each one of us and picked us as dancing partners! They taught us two partner dances, first an American dance, then a Russian dance.

We saw many other children's activities there including an airplane craft club, an auto craft club, and two beautiful singing groups! These six to twelve year olds harmonized like professionals. It's really moving to see these kids and the confidence and enthusiasm they have in what they're doing. Those little boy dancers, for example, were about nine or ten years old. They smiled at us and lead us in dancing so well, and we were so big compared to them.

I spent this evening walking and talking with



Deborah and I outside
Leningrad Pioneer palace
where she shows her new toy

one of the delegation, Deborah, and later in her room talking with her and her roommate Fran. Then I went to Anamaria's room and stayed until 1:00 a.m. talking about how we should handle the visit to clergy here. We concluded that meeting with clergy was extremely important since Bishop Quinn of Sacramento and the Sacramento Religious Community for Peace had sent information and letters with one of the women, 'Marie.' We'll work this all out tomorrow.

October 5th – We went to the Hermitage Museum today. What a spectacular place that is! The entire grounds leading up to the museum are beautiful, with huge spouting water fountains, lots of gilding on the statues, large ponds. Now, being fall, the trees there were especially beautiful, contrasting each other with their own different types of colored leaves. The place was amazing. I was told it's modeled after the Louvre in Paris.

Anamaria was really disappointed at first, because she was told she'd have to leave her cane at the entrance, and



Fountains in Leningrad with gilded statues

would not be allowed to touch anything. Since she is blind, she would not be able to see any of the wonderful sculptures and statues she had heard about. But with my help we snuck touches in almost every room, although the caretakers got after us a few times. Some of the women, who are really into art, will be going back tomorrow to spend more time there.

Also we went to the Museum of Ethnography, and to the Opera “Mazeppa,” by Tchaikovsky, in the evening. Mazeppa was great! Two sopranos were wonderful, as well as the tenor and two baritones. We got very good seats for 3 rubles each, second row center. The stage sets were magnificent, as well. At intermission they sold plum juice, cake, sausage sandwiches and chocolate. Each item was 30 kopecks. We took the tram and bus back to the hotel. It costs 3 kopecks to ride busses, streetcars and trams, and 5 kopecks for the subway.

All has been arranged to visit with Father Vladimir of the Russian Orthodox Church tomorrow.

October 6th – I can’t believe we made it on time to church. People we asked on busses kept giving conflicting directions. But we finally made it by 9:55 a.m. We talked to some women standing outside the church. One had a peace button on and kept pointing to it and talking real fast, smiling and bowing to us. She hugged and kissed us and gave us pictures of icons. A church administrator, Ivan, met us outside. He spoke Russian and German. He took us to his office where we left our things and he was to have us sit there for two hours until the service was over! I said that we would rather attend the service. He said, “But you’ll have to stand for two hours!” I said that would be O.K. that we could stand. So he led us into the church.

It was quite a place! Like other cathedrals I’ve seen in the Soviet Union, it was beautiful beyond words. About 1,500 people were there, mostly older women, I’d say over sixty.

There were a few men and some young women and children. We and the young women and children stood on a stage, in a fenced in area, near where the priest and others sang the service. The choir was excellent. This was communion day. Standing there for two hours was really difficult. After about an hour a priest came over to us and asked if we were Catholic or Protestant. I said in Russian, “Catholic,” speaking for the others. (Frances and Marie are very devoted practicing Catholics, and Anamaria and Earldean are non-practicing Catholics.) So he left and emerged after a few minutes from exquisite gilded doors, twenty or so feet high, with a podium, a gold bible, and a gold cross. He gave us a private mass and then each of us were ministered to, bowing our heads as he placed his neck garment over our heads, one at a time, and said something, including our names, which I didn’t understand. (I didn’t want to do this, but all the women standing around us insisted, and kept showing us what to do.) We each had to kiss the cross and the bible and then were lead to the communion line and were put up front of the line, so we



Roman Catholic Church in Leningrad, Anamaria on left

didn't have to wait. Then terrible cardboard-tasting bread, soaked in wine was placed in each of our mouths with a spoon by Father Vladimir, while other clergy wiped our lips with a cloth. Then we were lead back to the stage and handed cups of warm wine and dry bread. This, we were later told was all part of "communion." The spoon part is "on the lips" and the cup of wine, etc., is "washing it down into the body."

I felt so hypocritical taking part in this, when I have no belief in it, but really did not want to refuse, which I felt would have insulted all the concerned women around me. As we stood there for the remaining 45 minutes or so, many women came up and spoke to us and smiled at us. I told them we were playing a small part in trying to build a better relationship between our two countries.

After the service, we met with Father Vladimir. We gave him materials from the Sacramento Religious Community for Peace (SRCP), and a letter of introduction from Bishop Quinn of Sacramento. It was very exciting! Father Vladimir spoke English well, and we recorded his message to us and Bishop Quinn. He was such a warm individual, who seemed to be working very hard for peace.

A small group of us went to catch the 'hydrofoil' after lunch to visit Peter's palace (the summer palace of Peter the Great). The Hermitage that we saw yesterday is within this palace, and these women wanted to return. We stood in line 2½ hours (like church again!!) in order to ride the hydrofoil, whereas others had gone yesterday and got right on. The hydrofoil is a boat that skims the top of the water at a pretty high speed. Each boat carried 50 passengers. They arrived about every 5 minutes to pick up more of us, but there were so many in line, we just had to wait. The price was 1 ruble, 35 kopecks, one way. I have to admit, it was an exhilarating ride!! We got there somewhat late in the afternoon, and ended up not being able to tour again, but seeing the grounds again,

and all the little girls with their hair decorated with the autumn leaves was worth it. We got lots of beautiful pictures!

We stood in line again for one hour to have ice cream and cream puffs in an ice cream parlor near the palace. Then we went to Main Street to catch a taxi back to the hotel. We waited and waited, but none came. Finally we asked some people at the bus stop how to get back to Leningrad. They told us to take the bus to the train station, then take the train to Leningrad. So we waited for the bus. But before the bus arrived, a taxi finally drove up, but was hailed by another person. The man we'd been talking to, however, quickly dashed up to the taxi and talked for a moment to the driver and the person who had hailed him, and then all of a sudden we were told to get in the taxi. All agreed that the Americans should get the taxi, even the guy who had stopped it in the first place. We thought he was going to take us to Leningrad, but he was almost off duty, and only took us to the train depot, where for 25 kopeks each we caught the train to Leningrad. It was an old-fashioned train with wooden benches, facing each other.

A soldier, who is also a doctor, helped us find our stop and mapped the best way back to our hotel. We got off at the Baltic Station, which is right by a metro station. Then we took the Metro to another area, and walked about 8 blocks to the stop for the number 30 bus, which took us right to our hotel.

It's so beautiful in Leningrad at night! It was a warm night anyway and the lights all reflected in the many canals that flow through town under the bridges that connect all the islands that make up the city. It seems that Venice must be similar and I thought that gondolas giving rides down these canals might be a great idea here also. I didn't see any boats in these canals, however, except once on television as part of a musical special, where a man was singing on a boat streaming down one of these canals.

As we walked, we passed through the square where the revolution had occurred and by the Hermitage and the park near it. As usual there were many people on the street and in the park, even though it was quite dark. We felt completely safe, and it seemed that everyone else did too.

October 7th – Anamaria and I decided to spend the day going here and there on the subway and buses and just walking around Leningrad. We had lots of fun adventures! First we helped take Debby and Nicoletta to meet Debby's Leningrad friends – she had met some English speakers who had invited her and a friend to visit them in their home. They were to meet at a certain subway station. It was out of our way. We were going the opposite direction to visit the graveyard of Dostoevsky and also the great grandfather of my artist friend, Sasha, whom I had met in Moscow.

Anamaria and I both just love to take the subways! They're so beautiful and clean, plus it's a great place to meet people. They always seem so willing to help and talk for a while.

Well, it turned out, I mistook Nevski Prospekt for Alexander Nevski Metro station, so we were miles away from our destination, walking around wondering where the graveyard was. We had fun though and saw interesting sights. At a beautiful park we met teenage boys who told us we were miles from the graveyard, and must take a certain bus to a metro station, etc., etc. Well, we headed where they indicated, but the bus didn't come and didn't come. Sort of an unusual occurrence in my experience in the Soviet Union, where I've rarely had to wait over 5 minutes for a bus, tram, or subway train. But, anyway, we just decided to walk. Finally we felt we should be near the subway station by then, and looked for someone to ask directions.

I asked a young woman. She gave me a very long explanation. I thought I had understood all she told me, but

apparently she was not so sure and was so concerned that we might get lost, that when Anamaria and I had already found the Metro, descended the deep, long escalator, and were about to board our train, this same woman came running up. She had followed us all the way there unknown to us, to make sure we got on the right one! She said something else to me that I didn't completely understand. I thanked her and we hopped on our train. One stop before our station, everyone got out of the car. We thought that seemed strange, and when we looked out the open door, there was that *same woman*, gesturing frantically to us to get out! She was smiling all the while, and had apparently been certain we wouldn't understand that occasionally trains totally unload before their mapped destination to head it for repairs or such, and the occupants must all exit and board the next train. I guess that was what she had been trying to tell me about that train. When she felt I hadn't understood, she hopped on a car and went with us to make sure we exited when we should. Once we caught the next train, she caught hers going in the other direction. She really wouldn't have had to worry, I'm sure, because I don't think the other people would have let us just sit there. The people all seem to watch out for stragglers. Still, we were really grateful for her kindness!

So, we finally made it to the graveyard. We found Sasha's great grandfather, Sergei Alexandrovich Olkhin's grave, right near Dostoevsky's grave just as Sasha had told me. We took Polaroid pictures of the tombstone as a gift for Sasha when I return to Moscow.

Right across the street from the graveyard is the Moscow Hotel where I had stayed on my second night in the Soviet Union last month. Anamaria and I went over there for lunch at the "all you can eat" buffet. Then we wanted to find a bath house, and got directions from one of the cashiers to a bath house clear across town again!

So off we went on the Metro again. We emerged at the station nearest the bath house and saw what we considered a very odd sight. Two stands were set up right outside the Metro station. At one, two people were selling hamburger and roasts in half kilo packs for 95 kopeks each! The meat looked very fresh, right off the farm. At the other stand, two people were selling ice cream, no special varieties, just vanilla in a waffle type sandwich. There was a line of about 30 people to get the ice cream, but *no one* was in line for meat! As we stood there and watched, a couple of people came up and bought some meat, but the ice cream line just kept getting longer! Could it be meat is just not as scarce there as we are led to believe?

Well, we went on our way, looking for the bath house. We saw a colorful playground on our way, with lots of kids playing. There was an unusual teeter-totter there. Instead of sitting, the ends were high off the ground and consisted of bars which children held on to and kicked themselves up, alternately.

We had almost gotten to where the bath house was supposed to be, when we realized that if we were to make it to the opera tonight we really wouldn't have time for the bath house too, so we turned around and headed back.

The opera was, "Betrothal in a Cloister," by Prokofiev. It was too dissonant for me, but the others seemed to like it.

October 8th – Four of my group got up early and met at 7:00 to go to the Roman Catholic Church and meet with Father Pavelicus. We caught a taxi and got there in plenty of time. He met with us, spoke only Russian – I did my best to translate. We have an excellent statement by him to the American people which we recorded on cassette. He basically said that whether we are Catholic, Protestant, believers, or atheists, whether we are socialists or capitalists, we must all work for peace. We must coexist in this world or we will all die together in a nuclear war, and that bombs don't distinguish

between beliefs and social systems.

Father Pavelicus was a real character. We exchanged gifts after the interview and he asked if we had any gum! I couldn't believe it, such a dignified man asking for gum. Marie just happened to have a pack and gave it to him.

What an adventure we had going back to the hotel! We tried to get directions from some passersby but a couple of people gave us conflicting advice. I finally just crossed the street where I kept seeing empty taxis ride by and tried to hail one. It's hard sometimes to see which car is a taxi and which one is not. I figured, so what if we hitchhike? all the better! It will probably be cheaper; from what I've heard lots of people do hitchhike.

Pretty soon a man drove up with no passengers. I asked if he could drive the four of us to Gaven Hotel. He said, "Sure, jump in!" He was a fortyish, well-dressed man in a suit and tie and hat. His car was very nice, like new. He drove along looking straight ahead, not smiling, but just clearly involved in getting us there. I felt a little inhibited to talk to him with his stern face, but I decided to start up a conversation anyway. He did not speak English, so I did my best to speak and translate into Russian. I told him we were Americans, here to meet with Soviet working women and others, in the interest of building peace and friendship and a better relationship between our two peoples.

He smiled and I couldn't shut him up, from then on. He wanted to know all about America: Were there really homeless and unemployed in such a rich land? How could the American people elect a man such as Reagan? What did we think of Reagan? He said he felt that Ronald Reagan must be crazy. Why does he hate the Soviet Union so much? Why does he want to take the arms race into outer space? Why can't he agree to a nuclear weapons freeze like Gorbachev was proposing? After all, he said, it was you American people

who came up with the freeze idea!

We assured him there were lots of Americans like us who really want the freeze, and that we are frustrated with Reagan also. He said he has a high opinion of the American people, and just can't understand how Reagan got elected. We obviously had no answer to that ourselves.

He thanked us over and over for coming to Leningrad on such a noble mission and to tell the American people, that *we are* for peace here, and *we want* to coexist with you. We can live together and must, or we will die together!

We finally reached our destination. I asked if we owed him anything. He said, "No, and thank you again for coming to Leningrad to see for yourselves that Soviets are not evil people!"

I can't remember what he said his exact occupation was, although it had something to do with trade and he felt strongly that the U.S. and Soviet Union should be trading more with one another. He said over and over again, to please come back and see us, and send my best wishes to the American people.

We got back at 9:30 just in time to grab quick bites to eat and catch the tourist bus at 9:45 to depart for the Women's Committee.

At this point a difficult problem surfaced among our group that I hope will be solved as time goes on. Some women feel it is not correct to say we hear virtually only negative things about the Soviet Union in the U.S. This came out in a question by a member of the Women's Committee. She asked what information about the Soviet Union we received in the U.S. Some in our group felt that we *do* hear only negative things about them, and if it's the truth it should be said! I said we ought to each state our opinions and not censor anyone, but some disagreed with me, stating that we, as diplomats, should not say anything that could be

considered a slander against the United States. This problem was not solved, and looks to be serious.

All in all, I think our group appreciated the visit with the Women's Committee, despite our internal disagreement. It was very clear to me that these women, like us, are very concerned over the world situation and strongly desire peace. The head of the committee had met with Barbara Weidner, head of our local Sacramento group, "Grandmothers for Peace," last year. Barbara had sent a personal message to her through one member of our group, who presented it to her at the meeting.

BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

We left for our next destination, Baku, Azerbaijan, this afternoon, and arrived there very late, about 11:00 p.m.

I immediately tried to phone my contacts, despite the late hour, because we were only to be here for a few days, and I wanted to make sure some of us could meet them. I got in touch with Octai, an Azerbaijani film director, whose phone number was given to me by my friend Bill, who had met him in Berkeley several years back. He was supposedly one of the English-speaking contacts, but no, he spoke only Russian and Azerbaijani. Luckily I had prepared myself for that possibility. He told me he will call me tomorrow after work.

October 9th – We are in a beautiful hotel overlooking the Caspian Sea. There's also a health club next door to us, with a basketball court in view from my balcony, where I saw a co-ed basketball game going on this morning.



Two of my tour and our translator at airport,
in Leningrad, heading to Baku

The dezurnayas on our floor tried to help me contact Kamenkovich, another contact from Bill. She said she recognized the address and that it was in a beautiful old building with decorative balconies, and only six blocks away from our hotel! She wrote me out a small map. I took off on an early morning walk, since I didn't have his phone number.

I found the address easily, but I couldn't figure out how to find the apartment. I went into the courtyard and asked a woman who was sweeping there. She said, "Whom do you want?... No, I don't think he lives here." I kept asking where apartment 12 is, and finally two women stuck their heads out of different windows. One said, "He doesn't live here, go away!" The other said, "Kamenkovich? Yes he does, he's a correspondent isn't he?"

I said, "I'm not sure, I know he's an author."

"Yes," she said, "he lives over there, up those stairs."

So I went up the stairs, found apartment 12, and knocked. A woman opened the door. She had a questioning look on her face as if she had been hearing all that was going on out in the courtyard, and was wondering, "Who is this person with the strange accent asking about my husband?"

I said, "Tamara!" – on my list as Kamenkovich's wife – "I'm a friend of Bill, in America."

Her whole face lit up; she smiled and hugged me and said, "Come in, Come in!" She told me that her husband is in Germany now, but luckily her daughter Irina and her husband from Moscow are visiting now, but still sleeping. She said I should come back at 3:00 p.m. Irina, she said, would love to meet me and she speaks English!

Tamara is a teacher and was rushing out to work, so I agreed to come back about 3:00.

When I got back out into the courtyard, the woman who

had been so inhospitable before said, “I see you found your friend,” then smiled and asked, “are you Polish?”

I said, “No, American.”

She said, “Ooooh! American! Well, you speak Russian well! Come back and see us again!” And the woman who had earlier told me to go away poked her head out and yelled down, “Come back again!”

I got back in time for breakfast, and to go on our city tour. Baku is a beautiful city, very different, however, from Moscow and Leningrad. The Caspian Sea has an oily shine in places, but we were told it is thousands of times less polluted than it used to be. Many fish, our guide said, have now returned because of their policy of cleaning the sea through use of a modern filtering system. Baku is an oil city. The main industry is oil, but really you’d never know it by the air. There is no smell here like when you drive past the Richmond/Vallejo area where our Bay Area refineries are located.

They say the town used to have terrible air and water pollution. They say they still have a long way to go in depolluting the Caspian Sea in some areas; but there are nice beaches now, which we can get to by bus, if we want to swim. That hadn’t been our plan, however, and none of us brought our suits.

I called Ralfrid, a contact from Paula, when I got back. His son left a message for him to call me at 10:00 p.m. tonight.

Then I went back to the Kamenkovich’s, and met with Tamara, Irina, and her husband, Zhenia. They were very hospitable, as Soviets usually are, and we had a wonderful chat. They served me tea, chocolate, cake, and delicious, large pomegranates!

Octai, it turned out, is busy working late tonight, but told

me he'd call me tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. So I called Ralfrid, and he asked if I could come to his apartment this evening. I asked if I could bring a friend, and he said, yes, so I brought Anamaria. I thought the name, Ralfrid, was not a Russian name, so I asked him about it. He said he's an Azerbaijani. His wife, Svyetlana, was there, and she also is Azerbaijani. He spoke a little English, about as much as I speak Russian, so we went back and forth from one language to the other to make everything understood. He and his wife are both biochemists. He studied photosynthesis and she is more into medicine. Their 18 year old son is studying pharmaceutical chemistry in the institute.

Their apartment is really beautiful. It's big, old fashioned, and decorated with native art. It's like a museum, with artifacts, old native clothing, rugs and such on display. The men served us pomegranate juice and wine, cheese, bread, fruit, and chocolate.

We talked about many interesting things. Anamaria is very interested in biology. It was her field in the university, including botany, and she asked them many questions concerning pesticide and herbicide use, and genetic research to try to obtain different strains of plants, and such.

Most of this they were not directly involved with, but they said pesticides were not used, although herbicides were still used in some places, and that their use is limited more and more. They spoke about the expert Maltsev, the agricultural philosopher whom I studied about in Krasnodar, whose aim is to eliminate all pesticides and herbicides in the Soviet Union.

They asked about the U.S., and how we live there. Both Anamaria and I are not your financially well-off Americans, but we do both have places to live, and although we are in debt, as are most other working people, we are doing OK, relatively, and explained that as well as we could. We explained our frustration with Reagan, and his refusal to have

an arms freeze, and thus our trip here to help work for peace between our peoples.

They were very proud of the achievements of their country. Svyetlana said that her female ancestors all wore veils, and washed their husband's feet and were like slaves to him. But here she is coming home and resting, while her husband and son prepare dinner! They all laughed! While we were there, all the serving and preparing was done by the men, while we women talked.

It was a wonderful evening. They gave us gifts. I got a book on Azerbaijani art, and a pair of old shoes, from skins, with the turned-up sharply pointed toes, the type seen in museums. I hope I can get them out of the country! Anamaria got a decorative serving spoon. We gave them some of my union pins, and ball-point pens.

October 10th –

We went to an air conditioning factory today. I ran over to talk to women workers while we passed by on our tour. All were very nice and wished us well, and expressed their hope for world peace. I asked permission to leave the tour for a moment to speak to a group of women who were having a break. I went over to



Women workers in air conditioning
plant we visited in Baku

them, and they insisted I sit down and eat with them. They gave me some grapes. They were all older Azerbaijani women. I told them about my group, myself, my family, and that we were here in the interest of peace and friendship between our countries. My group was leaving so I had to run off. The women smiled big gold-teeth smiles at me and wished us all well.

Marianna was happy. She discovered that one of the factory officials, who was showing us the plant, spoke Spanish! So she, Anamaria, and Frances, our other Spanish speakers, asked him lots of questions. We also met two women who work in the quality control lab. This place deals with lots of chemicals and fumes, since they actually mold the plastic parts of the air conditioners here. Although they do a very good job of cleaning the air, some of the women said they smelled fumes. Others, including myself, didn't smell any. In any event, the fumes are practically non-existent. The plant was very clean. "Heavy work" is all done by men, they



Frances on way to hotel
beauty shop in Baku

said proudly, although I asked if any electricians were women in this plant, and they said there were some. It amazes me that the ethnocentrism of some Americans causes them to be way more concerned that the Soviet Union not have fumes in their factories, or use insecticides or herbicides on their plants, than if we do such things in the US!

When we got back to the hotel, we went to the hotel beauty shop, for

Frances, who is a cosmetologist. I did my best to translate for them.

They let Frances use their equipment to cut Marianna's hair, so they could see how Americans give haircuts. We had a long discussion about prices of haircuts, and styles in the US vs. in the USSR. We also talked about the need for peace, about Reagan, and the differences in living here vs. living in the US. Haircut prices, and other beauty treatments are much higher priced in the US, and it's hard to figure the differences in living standards, because there's a lot of variation of living standards among our group, whereas they felt their living standards are similar. Some of our group were higher salaried supervisors in State of California positions, and some had husbands with high salaries as well. They lived more like these beauticians thought all Americans live! But several of us made much less money, and were struggling pay check to pay check. We all agreed on the need for peace and better understanding.



Irina and Zhenia, couple we hung out with in Baku

Earldean, Frances, Marianna, Anamaria, and I skipped hotel lunch, and went to the Kamenkovich's for lunch. They invited all of us, but I always invite all of my group on my 'off normal tour' escapades, and usually they decline, except for a few. What a delicious lunch we had! We had a wonderful French bread and butter, with goat cheese. We had prunes in a cherry sauce, white figs, coffee with cream, and pomegranates. We stuffed ourselves!

Instead of going on the scheduled tour of the old city, the five of us went on a similar tour with Irina and Zhenia. We walked by the sea and met an old Azerbaijani woman and her grandson. She kept staring at us, so I walked over and told her we were Americans and had come here to meet Soviet people for the sake of peace and friendship and so forth. She smiled and let us take pictures of her and her grandson. Then she spoke at length about the last war and how it must not be repeated! Not for her, she said, but for the children. Then she started crying, and said she was sorry, but she cannot talk about this without crying; she has so many terrible memories of World War II, and worries so much that the children's lives will be cut short by another war.

We saw a militia man approach. Irina spoke to him and he told us we had to leave this woman, that there was some sort of confusion – he thinks we are harassing her. So we said good-bye to her and walked away. After a few minutes, however, we heard someone running up behind us. It was the militia man, a young Azerbaijani. He said he wanted to apologize to us, that he had spoken to the woman and she told him what we had been talking about, and that she was not crying because we were harassing her, as he had thought. He thanked us for our message of peace, and blushed and continued to apologize for chasing us away.

We walked through the old city that would remind you of an ancient city in Assyria, Egypt, Palestine or such. All the

buildings here are of yellow sandstone, like you see in ancient history movies. Archeological digs are taking place all over this area to try to uncover more and more ancient relics. When ancient art work, stone sculptures and such are dug up, they are artistically displayed in open museums in courtyards near the area where they are found. Still, however, within the walls of this ancient area, and among its inside museums and open air museums, many families are still living.

Irina told us all of this and that she actually had lived here with her family not long ago, before they had received their newer apartment. She took us to see her childhood apartment here. It looked so romantic to us, this sandstone apartment among the winding stone streets. But Irina laughed, and said she was never as happy as when she was able to move from this cold drafty place to a nice apartment in downtown Baku!

As we walked along, we met three women workers who were usually guides at the Museum of Rugs there, which is now being remodeled. We met them in a courtyard near the museum, and spoke with them for a while. They were all Azerbaijani, and two of them spoke English. We finally got to the subject of men, and if their husbands and sons helped out at home. Only one of them was married, and had two sons. The two unmarried women, said yes! Men help equally! But the married woman said, "Not my husband!" However, she said that her sons help her and she is teaching them that they should be equally responsible for domestic duties as women are.

We had such a nice day with Irena and Zhenia. We saw all the old city, and got many nice photographs.

We got back to our hotel at about 6:00 p.m., and I called Octai. He and his wife offered to take me and anyone else interested to dinner at a non-tourist restaurant with Azerbaijani food. I asked the others, but it had already been planned that they would go to the "Caravan Sarai," where they were to eat ethnic food, and have ethnic entertainment. I

sort of hated to miss it myself, but I just couldn't pass up this chance to spend the evening with an Azerbaijani couple. So I went alone.

They picked me up at 7:00 p.m. in their car. It turns out many more people per capita, own their own cars here in Baku, than in other Soviet areas. I wanted to suggest we join the others of my group at the "Caravan Sarai," since I had seen it in the old city earlier this afternoon, and it was such a beautiful restaurant, with ancient décor, and many, many rooms surrounding an open air courtyard, where the dancing and music were to take place.

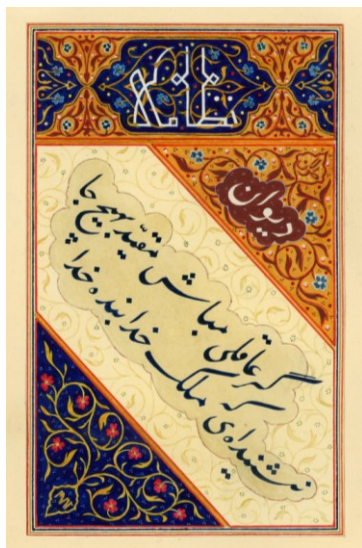
But they had already planned where we were going, so I didn't want to make any other suggestions. It turns out we got a much better meal than my group did. But much more exciting than the meal was the rest of the evening. I'll never forget this evening as long as I live, and I told them that too.

First of all we picked up their artist friend Elchin. Then we went to the basement studio of Galmani, another artist. They had two other guests, Miriam and Velodya. I thought, at first, that this was Galmani's apartment. It was a large three-room apartment with a kitchen and bathroom. It was decorated in a very interesting way, with beautiful antique furniture, such as a large heavy chair, like a throne, an old decorative organ, an old Grandfather's clock, a sturdy antique wooden table, with matching chairs around it, old musical instruments and lots of wooden puppets – his own creations – hanging on the walls. Velodya, also an artist, was the only Russian there. He was a real character, and prided himself on his travels to exotic places in the USSR, mostly in Central Asia. He lived near Samarkhand. Elchin paints and illustrates books. He also was a very interesting guy. He sang while Galmani played the mandolin and Velodya, the drum. They performed beautiful Azerbaijani songs. I love listening, and wished so badly I had brought my tape recorder.

Then, all at once, Galmani stopped playing and turned to me and said he felt I was being left out, and here I was the guest! I insisted I was fully enjoying their music. But he said they were simply being rude not to include me, and he started playing Beatles music, so I could sing too. It was so exciting for me to sing along with them, and their excellent accompanying. We sang: "Let it be," "Altogether now," "Michelle," "Imagine," and others. Luckily I love the Beatles and know all the words to many of their songs. They didn't know all the English words, but did great on the French part of "Michelle!" It was so much fun and a little comical to hear them singing the Beatles songs with their accents, and some of the words missing or filled in in Russian or Azerbaijani.

I pleaded, afterward, for them to sing more native music. This time Naila, Octai's wife sang. What a beautiful voice she has. Their music sounds like what I've heard in movies about the Middle East, and India. I asked her if she could teach me one of the songs and maybe an Azerbaijani dance. She said, "Sure, come over tomorrow, and bring some of your group, and I'll teach you all!" That sounds so great, I hope it works out!

Our host, Galmani, was again one of these Soviet People that just show so



Galmani, whom I visited in Baku, gave me this painting of his. It translates as "If you are not intelligent enough to follow any ideology, haven't you heard that everything belongs to God, and you too."

much hospitality, warmth and intelligence, but yet seem so innocent, and down to earth, with no pretensions whatsoever. He gave me one of his paintings as a gift, and everyone made quite a fuss, concerned over whether or not I could get it through customs. They showed me how to dismantle it from the frame and such so as to hide it in my suitcase. I hope it will be OK.

We drank wine, champagne, and ate stewed cherry plums. They all had interesting (I'm sure) discussions about art, literature, different cultures, and lands (where Velodya had been). I could grasp the subject matter but not much more. Naila is a teacher of 20th century American Literature. Unfortunately, although she reads English, she cannot speak it. And even though they all spoke Azerbaijani they mostly spoke Russian. Every now and then one or another of them would turn to me and ask if I've been understanding them. I'd say, "Not everything," so they'd start talking to me in a simpler vocabulary, asking me questions about America and such.

They made me feel so comfortable, but, really, it seemed they were all just being themselves, not special for me. Most of the time they just spoke to each other, but then they'd turn to me and ask another question, or make a comment real slowly and simply to make sure I could understand. The only time I was embarrassed was when Naila wanted to discuss American Literature with me. I had to admit that the Soviet school children I've met know more about American literature than I, or most other adult Americans.

I've gotten pretty good, however, in answering questions about the U.S., and when I was giving my opinion about the situation with the homeless, the unemployed, and race relations in the U.S., Velodya looked really amazed, and said, "I understand her completely!" Everyone laughed!

We left about midnight, and Octai asked if I was tired. I

said I was, but I'm enjoying myself so much I wouldn't mind staying up later. But then I thought I might be imposing, so I said I probably should go back to the hotel. They drove back to the hotel, but then passed it by, and drove back to Elchin's place nearby. They said, "Only for a half hour." So up we went to his apartment. His place also was just beautiful. It would match any \$1,500 per month apartment in San Francisco. He said they just finished remodeling it. I think it was a two bedroom. They had a large living room and kitchen. Their T.V. was built into the bookcase. Book cases were everywhere, full of books. His paintings were displayed here and there on the walls. The décor did not seem as traditional as at Ralfrid's. Velodya and Galmani arrived also. Elchin gave me a children's book he had illustrated as a gift for my eleven year old son. Galmani helped me try to pronounce some Azerbaijani words from this book. There was an Azerbaijani tongue twister in it that I could say, as long as I read it. They all really congratulated me and said that even Azerbaijanis have a hard time saying this tongue twister. I met Elchin's wife and his two boys. The boys served tea: it had a cinnamon flavor, similar to the Bigelo brand "Constant Comment." It seemed strange that the two young boys were up so late, and so wide awake! They were both studying English, but neither had the nerve to say anything in English to me.

Octai and Naila took me back to the hotel. Naila said to make sure I call her tomorrow and bring some of my group over to her place so she can teach us an Azerbaijani song and dance steps. I'll try, but unfortunately I think our schedule will be too full.

October 11 – Today was very disappointing. We went to the oil refinery in the morning and to the Temple of Fire Worshippers afterward. We had thought that the oil refinery would be attached to or near labs or administrative offices or somewhere where we could have a tour and speak with workers. But all it was, was a ride to see the oil rigs, and a

tour discussion with a city guide. We asked questions about the pollution problems in the air and bay there, and what work women did in the oil industry, but it's not the same as asking those workers themselves.

They said that the women did light work, or administrative work, but not heavy work. But as they were speaking, we passed three women on a work crew shoveling asphalt. It seems clear that women here, as well as men, are not proud that women do hard work, and are proud of the new laws that protect women from hard work. Still, many women do work hard, as we see when we ride around. To them, equality is shown by the number of women in higher education and who work in occupations requiring higher education, such as engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers, judges, etc.

When we got back, I contacted Naila and told her I had to go to a meeting at the house of friendship, and maybe could meet her at 5 or 6 p.m. I agreed to call back then. The meeting was very disappointing. There were three Azerbaijani men and one Russian (Jewish) woman. The men said sexist things and were very impolite as well, chatting together while one or another of our group was talking. We asked the woman some questions, but everyone was so disappointed in the meeting, which was supposed to be a discussion with Azerbaijani women on their role in the planning of culture and society in Baku. Only one Azerbaijani woman appeared all afternoon, and she served us juice and mineral water, and gave us gifts.

I called Naila, and unfortunately it just won't work out with her for this evening. My other friend, Irina, was not home, so it turned out we spent the evening listening to music in the restaurant and talking to our Azerbaijani guide, Vidadi, about how he feels about women. It was terrible.

He is extremely chauvinist and feels that the man should choose the woman in marriage, not vice versa; that he rules the roost at home; that if the wife doesn't have children, the

husband should, and often does divorce her, but if the man is sterile they will adopt a child. He quoted from the “Bible” that “women are evil.” (I don’t know where it says that.) He used the Russian word for Bible; perhaps he meant the “Koran.” We asked if he considers himself a progressive person, and he said, yes. I asked him if he didn’t think women were more interesting when they had a better education and liked their profession, than when they worked only in the home, centering their lives only on their children?

I told him, that it seems to me that when women are only housewives, they often become boring to their husbands, lose interest in life, and are unhappy. Then their husbands start running around looking for interesting women. He smiled at me and said, “Yes, that’s true.”

So I asked, “Well then why wouldn’t you want equality for women, so they’ll be more interesting wives and happier people?”

He didn’t want to answer that question, and changed the



Small Baku band with our sexist guide Vidadi

subject by ordering more champagne.

Later, at the airport, we saw our chauvinist guide talking to three other young men in Russian. I wasn't really noticing what they were talking about. Our Russian guide, Lyuda, whispered to me, "Don't you hear them? They're talking about women's equality!"

The discussion began to get heated, the three other men obviously didn't agree with Vidadi. I asked Lyuda if they were Azerbaijani, and she said, "No! They're Afghani."

They were young, handsome men – students – one of whom had just graduated and was being sent back home via Tashkent. All three agreed that women should have the same opportunities as men and men should share housework equally. Our Azerbaijani guide finally got angry and left the room. So then we asked if most men in Afghanistan agreed with them. They said "yes... because comrade Karmal says that it's correct behavior and he's doing so much for our country that people follow what he says." I really felt they were speaking for people they knew in Kabul.

We asked if it was true that the Soviet Union drops explosive toys from helicopters that blow up in children's hands when they pick them up. They said that it's true such things happen to children, but that it is the counter revolutionaries, and not the Soviet Union that places them. They said that the Soviet troops help the people fight the counter-revolutionaries, and it's the contras that are waging war on the Afghan people.

I told them that I had heard that when the land was divided up for the peasants that many peasants wouldn't accept the land because their religion told them the landowner should keep it, and to take it would be a sin.

Mohammad, the one who was now doing all of the talking (the graduate) said that he hadn't heard such a thing as that.

The people on the land are so poor that when the land is given they take it gladly. He said he would get it touch with us in Tashkent and maybe we could discuss this more. I hope that works out.

TASHKENT

October 12th – We arrived in Tashkent to a big surprise. For the first time in over 100 years it snowed in October here. And only two days earlier it had been hot. When they said it was 0° C (32° F), I just couldn't believe it. To make matters worse, the unseasonable cold hit them by such surprise that heating problems were occurring all over the city. It turned out that at our hotel there was no heat or hot water!

We went on a city tour and met more Afghanis, four young men and a young woman; students here on a tour. We asked the woman if men considered women their equals in Afghanistan. She said, "Yes." She didn't seem at all concerned to be traveling with four men, and they seemed all equal to me. They looked well-dressed, happy and wanted us to take their picture together, which we did.

After the tour, and shopping, where I bought a beautiful fiery (yellow, orange, and red) colored bed spread, we came back to the hotel. Several of us planned to go to the banya after dinner. We went to the Fin Banya, which was about three blocks from the hotel. However, it was closed because they also had no hot water.

We were really disappointed, as were two Uzbek women (a woman and her daughter) whom we met out front. I spoke to them in Russian, and told them who we were, etc. They got really interested, and said they'd take us to a banya across town in another region where there is hot water.

We went with them way across town, and talked to them on the way. This was to be an adventure none of us will ever forget. The older woman works in a factory, making clothes and her daughter is a typist for a T.V. studio. We took several busses, walked a lot, we taught them to say "come on let's go!" and they taught us to say the Russian equivalent, "poshli!" It seemed like it was taking forever, and I knew we

would never be able to find our way back to the hotel. But I really trusted these women to return us safely. Then finally there it was! The banya!

After we arrived, we sat waiting for a while, and noticed that everyone was staring at us, as if to say, “What are you strangers doing here?” When we bought our tickets the ticket woman had a funny look on her face, so I explained to her who we are, and why we are in Tashkent. She began to get very interested. Two of our group had to use the restroom, so the ticket woman left her seat and escorted them around back to the toilet. Meanwhile the rest of us waited, and a couple of men, who had heard me speak Russian, started asking questions. Soon the ticket woman came back and walked over to me smiling. At that moment one of the men asked me what I thought about Reagan. The ticket women snapped at him, “Don’t ask such questions to our guests! That’s very impolite!”

She indicated to us that we should enter the banya, now. The first room was a dressing room. We all undressed and went into the next room, a resting room, cool in temperature,



Women in Tashkent helped us find Bath House, on right, and two others who were with them momentarily

then into the washing area, a steamy room, with showers, small basins, and lots of hot water! We washed and then dried off before entering the sauna, as we had been told was necessary. People were all staring at us. Although naked I don't think we looked like tourists any longer, but our group – Anamaria, Mariana, Frances, Earldean, Terry and myself, were a racially mixed bunch – Mexican, Black, and white, and all friends, which to them seemed unusual! We later told them we typified to an extent the racial mixture you find in America. (The funny thing is they also were mixed, with Russians, and Uzbeks, but I guess they were used to that.)

In the sauna the questions started. I translated as best I could for the women with me, as we told about ourselves, our families, and/or our professions, as well as about our struggles for peace in our country. They were all smiles and told us how happy they were to know this struggle is going on in the USA. The same discussion and questions went on in the rest area, after we came out from the sauna. They were so nice, and pretty soon the ticket woman had someone come get us so she could present us with gifts! She gave us beautiful Uzbek tea cups. We then went back to the showers, rinsed off one more time and came out to dress. Our two friends who had brought us were by now saying, "Hurry up, we have to go!" But the *dezhurnaya* had tea for us. We dressed as we drank. I did my best to answer more questions and translated questions from us to them and the answers, as well.

One young girl, about fourteen or fifteen, approached me, and asked what I thought of Samantha Smith. I told her I thought lots of people listened to her when she spoke about her trip to the USSR, and believed her when she said the Soviet people do want peace. I told her I was very sad about her death.

She asked me if we hear good or bad about the Soviet Union. I told her that we heard lots of bad, and that's why

we're here, to see what it's like, and return home to give a true picture of our experiences in the Soviet Union. I told them that we will certainly tell people in the U.S. about their bath house, and the wonderful people we met here. They told us we were the only Americans they had ever met, and that this was a day they would never forget. They sent regards to America and a wish for peace, our good health, happiness, and success to us and our children. They gave us many smiles and hugs. They were such beautiful people! It was so neat to see little girls, teens, and women of all ages, all smiling at us, wishing us well, and making us feel so welcome.

On the way home, I asked Masha (the daughter) if we could meet tomorrow, and maybe they could teach us to dance some local dances. She said, "Where?" and I said, "At your house, maybe?" She looked at her mother, and they both laughed, and Masha said something like, "They want to visit our shack!" I wanted to say, we don't care if it's small, or with adobe walls or, as you say, a shack. To us it would be very nice anyway. But I was worried about offending them, so I didn't say anything, and Masha said, "My house is too far away, but could we meet you at the hotel?" I asked the others, and they felt we should take them out to dinner. I told this to Masha, and she said to call her at work at 5:00, and maybe she and her mother would take us up on that. She gave us her work number and they left us at our hotel.

October 13 – Today we went to church to give letters and messages to the Greek Orthodox Bishop here. As in the previous churches, we were welcomed, thanked for our interest in peace and for coming to their church. They were all very friendly. We gave the bishop our letters, and taped a message of peace from the bishop to our people. We took Polaroid pictures for them and for us.

Several people were begging outside and inside the church. I asked the woman, who was in charge of welcoming

guests to the church, about the beggars. I said that I understood everyone either had a job or were on pensions, and all had somewhere to live, free medical care, etc., so why were some begging? She told me that there were very few beggars, but that they did exist. In some very rare cases, men simply won't work. They still have somewhere to live, but they beg for money for food. Others who beg, she said, get very small pensions or other government payments. They all have roofs over their heads, but beg to supplement their incomes.

One of the beggars was a young, quite fat man, somewhat raggedy, white, not Uzbek. He smiled and waved at us when we left and said, "Peace! Peace!"

I had seen Gypsies begging in Leningrad, but it seemed expected that if Gypsies wanted to be nomadic, rather than hold a steady job, they would beg.

I called Masha at 5:00. We are to meet her and her two brothers at 8:00 and go to a restaurant. Oh my god! What an evening! Masha, her mother, Lyuba, and her son Muryat, met Anamaria, Earldean and me and took us way across town to a restaurant. It wasn't quite what we had in mind. It seemed like more of a Western-type restaurant. They played some Uzbek music, but the more modern type.

While we were eating, people got up and danced. They danced a lot like Westerners would dance to rock and roll for some of the music, but when Uzbek music came on they'd dance differently, sort of like Greek dancing, with arms extended out to the sides, and twisting hand movements. We were served "shashlik," but would have rather had pilaf. Then Masha, Earldean and I got up to dance, and Masha showed us how to dance the Uzbek way. She is so pretty, and dances really well. We did our best to imitate her.

We sat down, and almost immediately felt an earthquake!

It stopped and then a larger quake really shook the building good!! The chandeliers were swinging like mad! We were scared! Anamaria said, "It's an earthquake, let's get out of here!" Everyone else had at first gotten quiet, but then laughed and got right back up to dance like nothing even happened. Our friends saw how scared we were and I gave some rubles to Muryat to pay for our dinner, and Masha and my group ran downstairs. A couple ran down after us and said, "Please come back and dance; don't worry, it was just a little one!!" But we had just been hearing about the '66 quake here, and how it practically leveled the city. We just knew a big one was coming any moment.

I kept thinking to myself, "Don't worry, the odds of an earthquake killing me in Tashkent are probably as rare as me striking it rich in Reno." We went back to the hotel anyway, and felt no more quakes. They took us back on the subway, and then the tram. We got several Polaroid pictures of all of us, and gave a couple to them. We exchanged addresses, and gifts, and wishes of success and happiness, and went into the hotel.

I was still worried about the possibility of a big earthquake, especially since we were staying on the 20th story of a 25 story building, but what could I do? I just told myself, the odds are I'll be O.K., and went to sleep.

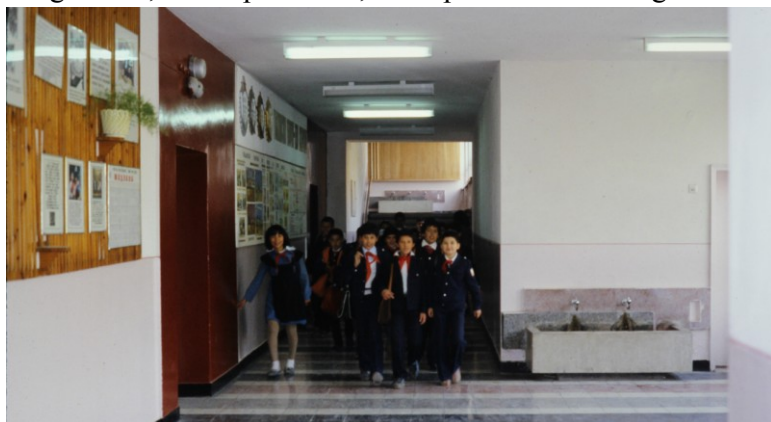
October 14 – We went to a school today and everyone was talking about the earthquake. We found out its epicenter was 50 kilometers from here and registered about 6 on the Richter scale here! The thing was that horrendous damage occurred in the '66 quake, and according to our guide, almost all the large buildings have been built since then and have been constructed to withstand earthquakes.

The school was interesting, as usual. It was an Uzbek school and the principal was an Uzbek woman. She told us about the new educational reforms where now teens, from the

8th grade and up, take ‘on-the-job’ training courses. She answered questions about the school and we visited classes.

A huge controversy came up among our group when Anamaria, in answering a question about whether or not American children are for peace, said: “Some children in America have gone to jail in the struggle for peace.” She was referring to a peace demonstration she had been in where children had been arrested with their parents. Some women really objected to that right there in front of the class. None of this got translated, so all the kids and teacher saw was a bunch of our group arguing. This discussion went on and on, out to the bus as we left, and we decided we’d better have a meeting on this issue, since we have such varied experiences and backgrounds. It was decided later, at the meeting, that either Nicholetta or I would answer questions about America, and we discussed guidelines as to what we would say, so as to satisfy extreme opinions on both sides of any controversial issue. That’s not easy, but the approach we came up with was a statement such as:

We are a group of women workers, with very diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and opinions. We all agree that



School kids in Tashkent coming down hall to meet us

there have been negative feelings existing in the U.S. concerning the U.S.S.R. for many years, but we differ as to whether we believe this situation is due to the lack of information and fear of the unknown, or outright misinformation about the U.S.S.R. In any event we are part of a movement of "Citizen Diplomats" that is growing in the U.S., who are coming to the U.S.S.R. to see for themselves, learn about the Soviet Union, and share with the Soviet people that we in our group are for peace. As far as education is concerned, some of us have had good experiences and feel education in the U.S. is excellent, and that we have good after-school programs, and "scout" programs for our children. Others of us have had the opposite experience and feel that schools and education are inadequate and many times even harmful to children, and that what "scout" programs and after-school programs are available are inadequate to nonexistent for most children.

I am to call on Nan to speak about programs in the private Catholic schools where she has taught, and Earldean, a black woman, about the inner city schools where she's taught, and her experiences.

This is as far as we got and it seems all are agreeable to this approach. We'll just have to see how it goes.

After such a good meeting, I was disillusioned when only eight women attended the afternoon meeting with Uzbek women and a physicist who spoke and answered questions on environmental issues. We were able to ask all kinds of questions about women. We heard all about the long struggle around women's removal of their veils. We also saw a film. It was really exciting to see actual newsreels of the 1930's, with women throwing off their veils into huge bonfires and crowds of other women cheering. Many women were killed by male family members for doing this. Some men were executed, and others imprisoned by the Soviet government for the

murdering of their women. Eventually the women won, and none of them wear veils here now.

Also the women here are very well educated, and are engineers, doctors, architects, politicians, etc. Our host, an Uzbek woman, was a Ph.D., the head of a department in the Academy of Sciences. We found out that the situation with men helping out at home was very similar to the U.S., some did, some didn't, and the struggle goes on. Divorce is also rising there.

IRKUTSK, SIBERIA

We left for the airport in the evening, and Mohammad, my Afghani friend met us there. He said he had tried to contact us at the hotel, but had been unsuccessful. We only had 20 minutes to make our flight, so we couldn't talk further, but a friend of Mohammad said he comes to the U.S. now and then, and he will mail a letter from Mohammad to me. I will try to write him also, but I don't think letters go freely from U.S. to Afghanistan now during the war.

On the plane to Irkutsk via Alma Ata, I met a woman doctor, and a man masseuse, who were just returning from a wrestling event in another region. They travel with the wrestling team professionally. The doctor, Tamara, told me she had been in Colorado Springs last year for a competition with a Colorado team. We talked a lot on our way, about our two countries, the need for peace, our families, and such, most of which I understood. Then she and I exchanged addresses and she invited me to stay with her in Alma Alta, if I am ever in the area. I thanked her and invited her to my home also.

We arrived in Irkutsk at about 6:00 a.m. The temperature was 3° C (about 37° F), but it really didn't seem that cold. Maybe because it was clear, and there was no wind at all. It's such a pretty, quaint city. The population is around 600,000, but it has a small town appearance. It's very old, clean, and picturesque. We saw no high-rises. There were lots of small wooden homes with three windows facing the street.

We went for a city tour. It was such a beautiful day – cold, but by then there were a few clouds, allowing the sun to shine through now and then. We are staying at a hotel right across the street from the Angara River. The people, just like everywhere else we've been are well-dressed, and seem happy.

We went shopping at a three-story department store,

which was crowded with people. They had a wide variety of clothing, coats, shoes, hats, etc., set up a lot like K-mart in the U.S. Then there was a section of real fur coats and hats, as expensive as in the U.S. I think – too expensive for me, anyway. They also sold musical instruments, glassware, gifts – fancy ceramics and such, yardage materials, yarns, and camping equipment.

October 16th – We went to Lake Baikal today. It snowed lightly all the way there, a beautiful sight to see from the warmth of our bus. We walked around in a small village near the lake, in the lightly falling snow, walked by a small beautiful church, and then walked to the beach. The village was small, with single homes and fenced yards, each with gardens.

Lake Baikal is amazing. It's so clean. Even from the road near it you can see rocks and sand deep in the water. They say it was getting polluted in one area about 15 years ago, but local protests turned to a national protest insisting that the paper plant (the culprit) be closed down. Apparently the type of paper made there was a special type needed for technical data for their space program, and its production required a vast source of distilled water for processing. (At a local museum, it was shown how there are very tiny shrimp that look like very fine orange sand, which in the whole world exist ONLY at Lake Baikal, and which constantly clean the water into a form as pure as distilled.)

(At a local museum, it was shown how there are very tiny shrimp, that looked like very fine orange sand, which in the whole world exist ONLY at Lake Baikal, and constantly clean the water into a form as pure as distilled.) Finally an agreement was reached to put a system of filters and other cleaning processes for all 'effluence' from the plant, so the plant could stay. Part of the agreement, also, was that in a few years, Lake Baikal will be even further protected by creating a

pipng system where all the treated effluence from the plant will be piped into the Angara River, which Baikal flows into. It was also agreed to restrict building any additional factories within so many kilometers of Baikal. Today the water is considered as pure as distilled. To me what happened due to the people's protest is a sound democratic process.

The day was beautiful again, after the light morning snow the sun kept peeking in and out of the billowy clouds, as we walked up a small hill to get a better view of the lake.

Later in the evening, some of our group went to the circus, while Earldean, Anamaria and I walked around the town. We went into many different shops. I guess since we were Black, Mexican and White, we looked pretty strange, because people kept staring at us. As soon as I explained to the shop people who we were, they and other customers were so nice to us, full of smiles, and wanting to help us in any way. We stopped at a clothing shop, a toy shop, a fur hat shop, a children's shoe store. One of the shops had appliances and dishes, and copper and other wire for sale, very cheap, and Anamaria purchased some of the copper wire for use in her art sculptures. She bought 2 bags of the wire for 3 rubles, 40 kopeks – a very good deal.

We walked along a shopping mall, somewhat similar to those in the U.S. We also saw men in karate gi's warming up by playing basketball in a small hall. We saw another club where young men and women were dancing. It was not a night club, but a youth club, giving ballroom dance instruction. The women wore short skirts, and the men wore suits and ties.

We saw a café and were going to go in, but there were several people still waiting to be seated, so we decided to pass it by.

On our way back to the hotel, we got lost and a warmly

bundled couple helped us find our way. They were so nice, and we talked on our way about their city, and how much we liked it. We told them of our trip yesterday to Lake Baikal. We told them about our city, Sacramento, and our river. It turned out that this couple, snuggled together, arm in arm, and laughing and talking, were father and daughter.

October 17th – Today our morning meeting was our best so far. We met at the House of Friendship with the women's committee and the peace committee. We talked about many different subjects, and both of our groups were very frank. We discussed American domestic and foreign policy, the situation with the Jews in the U.S.S.R., the war in Afghanistan, and more. The way they described foreign policy as they see it, is that the world is divided into two camps: Capitalist, and Socialist. You can't compare the Soviet Union in Afghanistan to the U. S. in Nicaragua, because you have to ask yourselves, what are they doing there and whom are they supporting. In Nicaragua and elsewhere in Latin America and the world, the U.S. supports the forces that exploit the people and keep them backward. The Soviet Union, however, aids the forces that are progressive, and against the exploiters, to help get a better life for the people.

In Afghanistan, they said, reforms were being carried out before Soviet troops entered, land was being redistributed to the peasants, literacy campaigns were, and still are, being carried out. Contras (the Mujahidin) funded by the U.S., China and Pakistan, make raids over the borders to try to change things back to the old way, where women were slaves to men, where there was 80% illiteracy, and where the vast majority had no land, etc.

Soviet troops were invited in to help repel the invaders. A Buryat woman, now visiting, and helping out the peace committee – the Buryat are one of the ethnic groups in Afghanistan – told us about the achievements of Buryat

women in the area, and that whereas before the reforms, they were only mothers and house workers, today they are able to receive higher education, and many now are architects, doctors, engineers and teachers. She told us that she, herself, is the Head of Philology in the Academy of Sciences.

All in all it was a good meeting. The one man in attendance spoke English, but fumbled around for words when asked if he shared housework equally with his wife. Finally he said that he did cook sometimes, and helped with his child.

The rest of the day was not too eventful. We were to tour a fur factory, but it turned out that some heavy inventory was taking place there, so it was closed to the public. For a while we visited one of the tombs of the Unknown Soldier.

Later we were to visit a Trade Union Palace of Culture, but although we did visit it, a conference on 'shoes' was taking place there and no classes or clubs were happening today until 7:30 p.m. Finally, however, they found one



Tomb of unknown Soldier, Irkutsk. Every city has these in memory of those who died in WWII

musical club in progress for us to visit, but the visit was somewhat disappointing, even though the building itself was magnificent.

This evening was really fun. After dinner we all went to the bar to dance – well, not *all*, but most of us. Some of us stayed until 1:00 a.m. We danced together, and with Victor, our guide here, until he left at about 11:30 p.m. Then some Swiss men joined in dancing with us. They spoke French, Italian, Spanish and German, but not English or Russian! So we just smiled and danced.

October 18th – Today we visited a kindergarten and a pioneer palace. My entire group is so impressed by all the great things they have for kids here. Their kindergarten, which is like our day-care centers in the U.S., is well staffed, and the kids have plenty of toys and activities. They look very healthy and happy. We got their picture as they danced with balloons for us.

The cost is from 10 to 15 rubles per month, per family no



Kindergarten kids with balloons Irkutsk, Siberia

matter how many children attend, and can be lower or free if the income per household is less than 60 rubles per month.

At the pioneer palace, we really had a treat. Besides visiting a number of clubs in music, crafts, dance, song, art, photography, horticulture and ecology, we were given a performance of ethnic dance, complete with costume. The kids danced European, Gypsy, Yugoslavian, and Cossack dances. Also a bass-baritone, around twenty-three years old, was simply amazing. Those of us who enjoy opera could not believe our ears! He had such a beautiful, strong voice, and reminded me of America's famous bass, Paul Robeson. All the performances were very enjoyable. We exchanged our greetings, and wished one another peace, success, and happiness. We exchanged gifts and left.

This evening we went to a Bach concert for a while at a church, famous for its huge, beautiful-sounding pipe organ. Some of us left early – not because the concert wasn't good, the woman organist was fantastic, but it was our last night, and some of us wanted to walk around some more. On the way



Kids at Irkutsk School saying goodbye to us

back to our hotel, we met a woman, Kloudia, who helped us with directions. She and I talked for a long time. The same thing happens over and over. People always ask about the homeless and unemployed in the U.S. and want to know what we think about Reagan. This woman was especially concerned with the November talks, and why Reagan didn't want to accept Gorbachev's peace proposals. I told her that I was also concerned, and struggle for peace in any way I can. I told her I also thought we should accept the proposals and intended to work hard to get people in my area to read the proposals and pressure their representatives and President Reagan to accept them. She was such a nice, warm person, and she wished all the best to us and to our families.

We got back to the hotel, and visited the bar for a while. Our group had some nice discussions. Hopefully we will all be getting along better now.

October 19th – Today we went to the art museum that is supposed to be the best in Siberia, if not the entire Soviet Union. Unfortunately a mistake had been made, and we had the wrong tickets. They were not accepted. Some of our group were more interested in going to the historical museum, which would have pictures of the ethnic groups here and their histories. We had originally planned to spend only about an hour in this museum and go to the other museum for an hour also. So began the mix-up and confusion. Lyudmilla, our group leader and translator, whom we all really liked, said, "OK, let's just go to the other museum instead," which supposedly would cost 30 kopeks each. Everyone agreed, but we had already checked our coats, so we had to go get them. The coatroom woman wouldn't have it!! "You must see this art museum! It is the greatest in all the Soviet Union! You cannot leave without seeing it!" She said she would go talk to the director, so Lyudmilla and the coatroom woman went to the director, but the director was adamant; if we did not have the tickets we could not visit the museum. So Lyudmilla came

back to the coat room and we continued retrieving our coats. Some of the women who had already gotten their coats started leaving.

The coat woman was frantic! She grabbed money out of her purse and pushed it at Lyudmilla, and said, "I'll pay, I'll pay!" Lyudmilla just couldn't take the pressure any more, and started crying. The coat woman thought she was crying because she couldn't see the museum. She kept pushing a 5 ruble note at Lyudmilla, and our poor guide kept saying in Russian, "It's so funny, so funny," and she was crying and laughing at the same time, over the crazy situation. I finally tried to explain that most of us would be happy to just visit the historical museum since we only have an hour left before we had to leave to the airport.

But the coat lady was looking at all our sad faces, as we tried to console our tearful guide, and she was certain we were all sad because we couldn't see her museum. She said, "Please! Just 15 minutes, just 10 minutes, that's all!!" But by then, Lyudmilla had also left, and only four of us were still there, not wanting to hurt this poor coat lady's feelings. I told the woman that we were really sorry, but we had to go, and were so sorry for the disturbance. We still loved Irkutsk, and are sure the museum is wonderful, but it just isn't working out for us to see it. Nan and Marge finally decided they would stay and see it, and meet up with us later. I thought the coat woman was going to cry, but Nan and Marge staying helped a bit.

We got outside, and Lyudmilla, still a little shook up, asked me if I would find directions to the Historical Museum, because she just didn't want to talk any more. I got directions, and we found the museum, but after all that, it was closed for repairs, so we ended up missing out on both!

We decided to walk around town for a while, and passed lots of people working in parks, greenbelts, streets, etc., cleaning up. We found out they were "Red Saturday" crews

preparing for the November 7th holiday on the anniversary of the October Revolution by the new calendar. One group of young people had been raking leaves and were now taking a break and singing. We walked up and asked who they were and what was happening here. I told them we were from America and this activity was very interesting to us. So they told us about “Red Saturday,” and that they were volunteers from the Physics Department of the University. We asked if they could play the guitar and sing again for us. One young woman yelled out to the woman with the guitar, and said, “Come play for our American friends!” So they sang us a song about a “small ship.” We recorded it, and I’ll have to listen closer to it later and see if I was right, that it’s a song for peace, and the “small ship” is the Earth.

So then we took pictures, and a couple of us helped them rake leaves, “in the interest of international solidarity.” They were such enthusiastic young physicists, mostly women. Some were from Irkutsk, Baikal, and other regions in Siberia. They were very glad to have met us – and us, them. We exchanged greetings and wishes for peace, and left.

When we got to the bus, the driver, and a new woman guide who was to see us off to the airport had both read my essays from Krasnodar, that I had given the driver the previous night. They really liked them, because, “They really gave a feeling of the U.S. from a working woman’s point of view.” They told me that they would be good for children to read too. Oleg, the bus driver, asked me if he could keep them. I’d love to give them to him, but they’re so precious to me, and I can’t part with them. After all, Elena had corrected them all and I had rewritten them. I really want to learn them well, and make them a part of my Russian vocabulary. So I took Oleg’s address, and said I’d make copies and mail them to him.

BACK TO MOSCOW

We caught the plane to Moscow. We made one stop in Novosibirsk. In the airport we were watching T.V. I was sitting with Lyudmilla, when a musical show came on with a Bulgarian singer playing the violin and singing to Russian children. They were smiling, clapping, and dressed colorfully. It took place in a playground, and at a carnival, so the kids were also shown on rides at different intervals of the songs.

I told Lyudmilla, that it's really too bad our T.V. never shows such pictures of Soviet children, happy, healthy, singing, and having fun, because if it did, the American people would probably have a better opinion of the Soviet Union. Lyudmilla said that she couldn't believe such things aren't shown in America! She said, on their T.V. many American films are shown and the people love them. In fact, she said, that many people, including herself, base their interest in the U.S. on these films, and feel that the U.S. would be a great place to live and you could have holidays there so cheaply, and have a nice inexpensive home, etc., etc. She said it didn't seem fair that the U.S. never shows positive aspects of the Soviet Union on American T.V. "Wouldn't that help us to have peace?" she wondered. I agreed.

October 20th – While others went on the City Tour and visited the Kremlin, Anamaria and I went to see Ryurikov. First, though, we tried to see Sasha. On our way there, on the subway, Anamaria and I spoke with a Russian guy who I had noticed was reading an American book in English. I asked, in Russian, if he only read English, or also spoke it. He said he also spoke it.

He sat down by us, and we started talking. I got bold and asked right out if he was one of the supporters of his government or a dissident. He didn't get all nervous, and look around for fear of anyone listening, but simply said, "I like it

here.” We asked him what he liked about it and he said we were asking at a very opportune time since he is right now feeling very happy and rested after having just returned with his family from a three week vacation on a luxury cruiser on the Volga River. His trade union, he said, picked up about 80% of the cost and the cruise and food totaled only about 130 rubles.

He said he felt that life was probably much easier here than anywhere else in the world for working people. “We all have jobs guaranteed, and all we have to worry about is where and when to spend our next vacation.” His thirteen year old daughter, his only child, is very active in the local pioneer palace, and he feels she is getting an excellent education and is a pretty happy girl.

He had seen “Rambo” and “Rambo II,” and asked us what we thought about those movies. He said he felt it was terrible to whip up war hysteria like that and that the films helped to totally distort the Soviet people in the minds of Americans. Even though neither of us had seen it we agreed, from what we’d heard they were terrible films.

He said that films like that glorifying war were forbidden in the Soviet Union (he apparently saw Rambo on a VCR). He said he was glad there were laws against that type of film here.

By the time we got to Sasha’s Metro station, it was just too late. I found out later, he had waited for us a half hour but then had gone home because he had a lot to do. When I had spoken to him on the phone, I told him I’d try to get over to see him once more before we leave.

We rushed back on the subway to the Ryurikov’s. It’s so nice to only have to pay 5 kopeks for these Metro rides. Otherwise going miles out of our way and not being able to see the person we wanted, would be irritating. But, as it was,

we lost about three-quarters of an hour, and 5 kopeks each. The Ryurikovs were waiting for us when we arrived. Rita, Yuri's wife is really into "extrasensory perception" and believes that she is clairvoyant. My vocabulary in that area is quite limited, but somehow we communicated. She was intrigued with Anamaria's blindness and "checked her aura" and said it is much larger than most. Anamaria really liked the Ryurikovs. They were vegetarians, for one thing, and fed her really well. She had been just dying for a better vegetarian diet than we had been getting at the hotels, which was mostly breads and cheeses, and hardly any fruits and vegetables, and no grains except what was in the bread.

Later Yuri traipsed all over the neighborhood with us helping to get Anamaria the food she needs, just in case the hotels continue to deprive her of a good enough diet.

This evening seven of us went to visit Lilly Golden and her daughter Helen Hanga, the two Black women, English speakers, who were among my Moscow contacts. These women are so interesting, as well as being just kind, down-to-earth people. We

had a wonderful evening discussing our impressions of the Soviet Union. We asked them questions about themselves, and their lives here in the



Chess club in Moscow

Soviet Union. Helen, the reporter for *Moscow News*, interviewed us for the newspaper. They gave us cookies and tea, we exchanged gifts, took pictures, and invited them both to visit the States, and come see us. We definitely intend to follow through with that invitation for Lilly and her daughter, as well as for the Tashkent scholar whom we met, and whom Lilly knows.

October 21st – We went to a trade school today. It wasn't as interesting as I had hoped. Only fun thing was the chess club! Not exactly a trade! I had thought we'd see people working at their trades, but actually it was just classrooms, like any college or high school. We saw one plumbing and welding lab, but no one was working in it. The same for the machine shop. We did ask a lot of questions, though, and found out that there were many women tile setters, and painters, and also some women welders and pipe fitters, but very few. Women, they said, usually concentrate on the finish work. A man and woman working on the street stopped to talk to us, and thanked us for wanting peace.

Five of us went to Gorky Park in the afternoon. That was really fun. It was sunny most of the day, although chilly. But we still went up on the Ferris wheel, and had some snacks at the snack bar, but mostly we just looked around. It's such a beautiful park.

This evening Anamaria, Earldean and I went to Tracy and Zhora's place. We had a delightful evening with them and their 14 month old baby. Zhora made a delicious apple cake, and we ate it along with a yummy melon from Tashkent. This was the first melon we had, even though we had been in Tashkent.

As usual we had an interesting conversation. For one thing, since Zhora is an actor, Terry, a lesbian in our group wanted us to ask him about gays in the Soviet Union. Both Tracy and Zhora said, yes, there are gays, but it's very hidden

here because it's illegal and considered unnatural. On the other hand they hadn't ever heard of anyone being arrested for it. They felt it would probably be easier to be gay here than in the U.S. because people are all naturally affectionate in public with others of the same sex. That *is* acceptable. It's considered perfectly normal behavior for two men to kiss in public and to walk arm in arm. Likewise for women.

Zhora said that there's an actor at his theater that everyone suspects is gay, because he acts very "swishy," but nothing much is ever said about it, and he's certainly not discriminated against.

We talked about Afghanistan and events in the Middle East. We also talked about Tracy's friend Holly who goes to a clairvoyant healer for a thyroid condition and other physical problems. Anamaria is especially interested in this and Tracy is going to try to get Holly and Anamaria together tomorrow or Wednesday, if Holly happens to have an open appointment schedule. Anamaria could observe.



October 22nd
– I found Natella, Irina's sister, home and went to visit her today. I couldn't find any others of my group interested in coming with me, so I just turned them all over to our

Women painters, Moscow

guide, to visit museums, have lunch out, and so forth. I told them I was sorry, but to me visiting the people in their homes is much more important than the planned tours. Some of my group are angry at me for this attitude, but others understand, and feel a lot like I do. I've made it clear that anyone who wants can come with me, or take the tours, and they know I always attend the planned meetings with the different Soviet committees, and official gatherings.

Natella told me how to get to her apartment, but I got confused at the metro station. I was to take the #240 bus toward the Solntsevo district, and meet her at the store, "Everything for the Home." I asked a woman at the bus stop if this was the right direction to Solntsevo. She said it was, and



Street workers in Moscow thanked us for wanting peace.

to sit with her, and when I told her I wanted to get off at "Everything for the Home," she said she was getting off there also. On the way she asked me questions about America, of course. I answered as well as I could. She gave me two cheese pastries, and I gave her two of my union stickers. She pointed out to me different areas we were passing. One was the Olympic

Village, where the athletes stayed during the 1980 Olympics.

She transferred at the store, “Everything for the Home,” but was so worried about me standing there alone. I insisted that I was just a little early, and that soon my friend would come to meet me. She finally agreed and we said our goodbyes, wished each other well and she left. I looked around the store while I waited for Natella. It was sort of like the electrical department of Lumberjack, a retail outlet in the US. There were light fixtures. The really nice ones were too expensive, but they were chandeliers, with real crystal. There was a large samovar, non-electric, but really beautiful, for 28 rubles. They had switches and plugs, very different from the ones in the U.S., and I bought one of each, to show my fellow electricians when I get back home. They had plumbing fixtures, irons, and pots and pans also.

Natella walked right up to me and said, “Hello, Gwen.” She has never seen me before, and there were lots of people in the store, but I guess I just looked so foreign she knew it was me! She took me to her apartment, which happened to be right behind the store. She had a small but really beautiful apartment. It was decorated with paintings, some originals. Also she has a crystal chandelier plus beautiful Persian rugs, probably from Azerbaijan. She also has a really large display cabinet of walnut or mahogany, showing off her collection of crystal, and decorative plates, cups and bowls. Above it is a book case, in which she has a library, from which she later took six new books to give me as gifts. Some were in Russian and some in English.

She had told me on the phone that she would have to apologize to me for not having much in the house to feed me because her husband was out of town, and she’s resting now, and hasn’t been able to go shopping. I had told her that was fine with me, because at the hotel they were really over-feeding us. So for lunch all she had for me was: cheese, three

kinds of bread, butter, homemade jam, made from berries on her trees (they looked like pyracantha berries, but couldn't have been) which tasted like apricot jam, a relish made from Azerbaijan eggplant, fresh tomatoes, coffee, and chocolate. That's what she serves when she 'doesn't have much in the house.'

We had a nice visit. It's really fascinating how over and over Russians are apologizing for the inadequacy of their apartments. But it seems to me that although most are small, they are all so nicely decorated, and not cheaply at all! In fact the Soviet apartments I've seen are decorated like middle to upper class homes in the U.S. and are much better decorated than my house, my parent's house or any of my siblings' houses. So when they apologize to me about their places, it always seems strange. I usually tell them that I have a big, old house, and a large yard, but that my place is very much in need of repair and not well decorated at all, and that if I hadn't come to the Soviet Union, I could have used that money to help decorate and fix up my home, but that the trip was more important to me. Actually to make my place look like a middle class home would cost much more than the \$2,500 I spent for this two month trip, and no way could I afford it.

Natella said that the reason for the apologies about their homes is that Soviet people think that all Americans live in beautiful homes such as those they see in "Dallas," and other American films, and that a Soviet apartment is something to be ashamed of. "We really get a positive feeling about the American standard of living," she said, "from listening to B.B.C. and Voice of America, and seeing American films. And when our government says that there are many homeless and unemployed in the US many of us find it hard to believe, and consider it Soviet propaganda."

She told me how the Soviet people are really into theater, films, art, and literature, and that they all read newspapers and

keep up with world affairs. She feels that they get better educated on world affairs than Americans do because they hear their news sources, plus the BBC, and other Western sources, whereas very few Americans actually hear any positive reports about the Soviet Union, and their news sources give only one side of the story on world affairs, which are also very negative toward the USSR.

She wanted to give my children a box of candy, but that it was at her job. She said she'd get it tomorrow, and I could come over and get it. But I know this won't work out, because our schedule is just too tight.

Tonight a group of us visited Vladimir Pozner. There were going to be thirteen of us going, most of whom had just not found the time yet to visit anyone's home in the Soviet Union. But unfortunately seven of them cancelled out at the last moment, out of just being too tired from the day's tours, so only six of us went.

We took a bus, the subway, and then walked about six blocks to Pozner's apartment.

He is quite an interesting person. He was apparently the child of a Russian movie producer, and raised in New York City. He now works for *Radio Moscow*, and is playing a prominent role in trying to bring the U.S. and Soviet people closer together. He hosted the San Francisco/Moscow international program, "Beyond War, Space Bridge," last year, and meets with citizen diplomat groups from the U.S. regularly. He speaks perfect English, with no accent, and knowing the American culture, and understanding the people better than many at official meetings, he is easier to talk to and his answers to Americans' questions make more sense.

Two of the women asked about discrepancies of what communism claimed to be – equality for all – and what they had seen, such as limousines here and there, while most

people had to take public transportation, and such as now and then having seen older women begging on the streets.

He said, first of all that they did not claim to be communist, but socialist, which means: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his *work*," rather than, "...to each according to his *needs*," which is the communist ideal. He said, "We don't have equality here, and we don't claim to. We are working in that direction, though." He said that the privilege some get is a tradition that comes from the hard times the Soviet Union has faced – revolution, foreign invasions, two world wars – and the decision to keep the political, economic, cultural and scientific leadership alive and able to function during these crises, at times when many people were starving. So the rationing and hard times put up with by the populace, were kept at a minimum for the political, economic, cultural and scientific leaders.

"Special stores you hear about, came into being from this, and still go on," He told us. "We are not perfect, and have a long way to go! But keep this in mind! The most privileged official or worker here still only gets the equivalent in wages and benefits of about 50 to 1* over the poorest paid worker. Compare that to billionaires in the US vs. the average worker's wage, not to mention street people and I think what we have is much fairer."

"Also, when you look at it statistically," he said, "the standard of living of the Soviet masses is increasing year by

* This ratio seems inordinately high. According to Albert Szymanski's book, *Class Structure* (New York, Prager, 1983, p. 588) "The very highest incomes in the Soviet Union (of which there are very few) are roughly ten times more than the average industrial wage, while the wages of the highest level state ministers and enterprise managers are about 2.7 to 4.0 times the average industrial wage."

year. We have no homeless, and even the few you may see begging, still have shelter, free medical care, pensions, and food. They apparently just want extra money and you can't blame them for that, but they are not starving or homeless."

What he basically kept saying is that although there were inconsistencies and many imperfections and problems, he felt that their system of government was providing the basics for all people, and was doing its best to raise everyone's standard of living, and to try to attain peace and disarmament.

Dissidence, he felt, was actually rare, and that most people, despite their complaints, are proud of their country's achievement and are patriotic citizens. Actually that has pretty much been my feeling as I've spoken to people throughout this visit.

As an example of how they are working for equality, he pointed out his apartment, and that the others in this building were similar – very nice, spacious, with high ceilings. He said that this building is very old, and that's why it's larger than the new ones, but that other residents here are workers: a teacher, a cop, and others who make less per month, some much less per month than he, but still live here. In other words, it isn't like the larger apartments are reserved only for the higher paid.

I really wish more of my group had come tonight, and also that Mr. Pozner had been better rested, because, as it turned out, he had worked 12 hours that day, and would be working tomorrow also. I commented that he really looked tired, and we didn't want to stay too late. So, unfortunately we really didn't get to ask all the questions we would have liked to. Nevertheless we all felt it was a worthwhile and very informative evening.

October 23rd – Our last day! I can't believe these two months have passed by already. I'm not ready to leave yet.

True, I miss my family, but I keep telling everyone I wish I had just one more week!

We went to a polyclinic today. Only eight of us went, and an equal number of doctors, all women, met with us. We had a long conversation with them on women's health issues: birth control, tampons, sex education and such. They were very concerned about the problem of birth control, and that too many women have too many abortions. They said that all women applying for an abortion have counseling, and are encouraged to keep the child if at all possible. But, they said, if a woman still wants an abortion, it is her right, and she will get it.

They said they have very inexpensive birth control available, and many use it, but many others avoid the safest ones, pills and I.U.D.'s, because they feel such methods are bad for the body. Vasectomies are unheard of! They do have inexpensive condoms available at drug stores, but all in all it seemed to me, from what the doctors said, Soviet women are mainly responsible for birth control.

They said that sterilization, or tying the tubes of women, is very rare, and only done in cases where the woman's life was in danger if she was to become pregnant.

They felt that tampons were very dangerous, and should not be used! They are not available at all in the Soviet Union!—unless, like one of our guides, you make them yourself, out of gauze and cotton. Their sanitary napkins are of gauze and cotton, and hold very little liquid. One would have to change very often. (I know, I borrowed one, one day.) We showed them the test you see on T.V. with one of our tampons, dipping it into water to show how much liquid it held! The doctors all gathered around, and were very interested, but still all felt that too much bacteria would enter the body if they were used, and none felt they would be wise to recommend them.

We asked about sex education. They said that it was offered to thirteen year olds, with their parent's consent. We all felt that was too late. They did say that girls got clinical information about menstruation earlier – about nine years old – but it wasn't like sex education. We told them our different perceptions of how sex education was handled in the U.S. It seemed to me that we have a somewhat better system, in that regard, but both countries are lacking, probably due to parents' concerns over their children when they reach puberty, and real lack of knowledge of what is best for them at this age.

This polyclinic had recently hosted two groups of physicians from America, and both groups told them the same thing: that due to the high amounts of tax money that goes for medical care for the poor, that the poor have the *best* health care in America! I really wish these comfortable American doctors would take the time to come to my neighborhood, and interview the poor, and see what *they* think. Or maybe they could sit in the emergency room at our county clinics, and hospitals one evening, and ask the many people sitting for hours waiting to be helped, how *they* feel about their medical care.

It's true, we have many excellent hospitals in the U.S., but there are incredible discrepancies in care for the rich vs. for the poor, and I think it's very deceitful that those American physician tourists presented such an inaccurate picture to these Soviet doctors about American health care. There's no way U.S. doctors were simply unaware of the extreme discrepancies!

This afternoon Lyuda, our floor *dezhurnaya*, and I were trying to round up a movie projector for a special presentation I had been working on for tonight. My friend, Yuri Ryurikov, had come through with his idea to get his friend Nikitin, the teacher with the unusual methods of early childhood education, to make a presentation to my group, and he and I

had arranged for Paula Garb to translate for my group. The presentation was to take place in the T.V. watching area on the 22nd floor of our hotel. The only problem was, that Nikitin had a film to show and needed a projector. So we tried to rent one. But we were having no end to difficulties in that because it couldn't be just any kind of a projector, but a specific type for the film he had.

We were explaining our dilemma to one of the hotel managers, and she said, "Nikitin! Isn't he the one whose special is on T.V. tonight?" Lyuda said she didn't know, but the manager said she was sure it was to be on tonight at 8:45! We checked the T.V. schedule, and sure enough, it was almost as though we had planned it that way! Our presentation was to be at 7:30 (it turned out to start at 8:00) and at 8:45 the T.V. special started, with pictures of the kids, some babies, that he was working with, all the equipment, and his methods. So we didn't need the projector at all!

It was such a delightful last evening. Paula translated Yuri and Nikitin's presentation. We saw the T.V. special on Nikitin's methods. We had a question and answer period. Nikitin demonstrated his "unicube," blocks, one of the methods he uses to train children, young, so their minds will be more logical and math will come easily to them.

What was most interesting to me about this method, and Nikitin, himself, was that to most Americans, the Soviet Union is thought to be a centrally controlled, very rigid society, where creativity is discouraged or not allowed at all. And here was a man with a method of education that involves accustoming children to extreme cold temperatures, training them with gymnastics equipment from birth, teaching them math and reading at very young ages, and the use of the "unicube." All of these ideas are very different from the norm, and I'm sure are opposed by probably the vast majority of Soviet people, *and* their government. But Nikitin has had his

schools anyway, written books, struggled against any opposing opinions and now even *T.V. specials* show his method. That simply doesn't fit my stereotype of what could happen in a "closed society" or a "patriarchal dictatorship!"

In fact, this situation is vividly contrasted in my mind with a struggle my neighbors and I had in my "average American neighborhood." A day-care center teacher wanted to give our children a head start by teaching them the alphabet, some writing, and for those wanting more, some advanced things like looking at the map of the US and learning the states and their capitals. Sure they were only three and four year olds, but my four year old son along with several others loved the "states and capitals game." Most of the little ones were learning to print their names, as well. The vast majority of parents approved of this teacher's ideas, and the kids loved him, but the school director and the board of education decided that teaching so much so early would hurt young minds. We fought over this for several months, but although so many parents were on board to keep this teacher, and it seemed like we were going to win the battle, the administration harassed him so much, and lowered his working hours, so he finally felt forced to quit.

Perhaps the Soviet Union is not as detrimental to creativity and the US not as supportive, as many think!

Anyway, following Yuri and Nikitin's presentation, everyone was able to ask Paula questions, as well. She told us about her past, the reason she is living in the Soviet Union, about her children, their educations, etc. Terry, the lesbian in our group, asked her what the situation of homosexuality is here, and was it illegal as we had heard.

Paula said that she had spoken with a psychologist here, and that he had told her it was a common misconception that homosexuality is illegal here, and that it is not illegal except if rape or force is involved and, of course, that is the same for

heterosexuality.

She said that everyone knows that the gays hang out near the Bolshoi Theater, and at a restaurant near there. She didn't know about any other places, and said that it is very much in the closet here. However, she agreed with others we've spoken to on the subject, that it would probably be easier to be gay here, since affection between members of the same sex is so freely and openly shown, and publically accepted.

CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties in trying to keep the peace among participants in our “citizen diplomacy tour,” it was an enjoyable and educational trip. Did we make a difference? Well, at the time many US individuals were traveling to the USSR for the sake of “peace and friendship,” and it was only several years later that the USSR broke apart.

Thousands of people from the old USSR have since immigrated to my small area of Bryte, in West Sacramento. This is an area that has always had lots of Russians. There is a Russian Orthodox Church there, and a new huge Russian Baptist Church was built for the influx of so many Russians in the 1990’s. I’ve talked to a number of the immigrants, and also read a number of articles about them, and truly many of them are disappointed. They were convinced that the streets in the US were paved with gold. Many got their opinions from watching American movies, and TV shows, and were sure they would all be living in mansions like were shown on these films.

The housing projects in our area became filled with Russians, as managers found every reason possible to evict the Latinos, Blacks, and poor local whites, to make room for the new immigrants. Many of them could not find work with wages high enough to support their families, and went on welfare, and became very upset at the poor overcrowded health clinics for their families. They loved the beautiful grocery stores, and the wonderful food available, but were disturbed at how fast their food stamps were gone each month.

As bad as their lives had seemed in the USSR, at least they had jobs, and the price of food and lodging was very low. Here, there just weren’t enough jobs for them. I talked to a dentist, a doctor and a scientist at some friend’s house, one

evening, who were very discouraged that with all their education in the USSR, they were unable to get good jobs here. The scientist (a man) was a cab driver, and he said most of the educated men he knows are driving cabs, or working on menial jobs. The doctor and dentist (both women) had found work as waitresses, and were going to night school to complete what they were told was required of them to actually work in their specialties. Unskilled workers just couldn't understand how in America they weren't just handed good paying jobs, beautiful apartments, great health care, etc. And now what can they do? Go back to a place so corrupted with those with the capitalist point of view, doing anything they can to grab all the spoils, with mafia type policing, to keep the people down?

I think a number of questions need to be raised now:

- Could a system of government that lasted for over 70 years, and seemed to be providing better and better life styles for its people, really have been that bad?
- Doesn't the fact that they *survived* so long, despite being invaded by capitalist countries from the very beginning, being massively infiltrated by CIA and other capitalist spy networks throughout their existence, and having endured and suffered the ravages of Hitler's war, mean something?
- What's going to happen now that imperialist wars are raging everywhere and there's no Soviet Union to provide a deterrent, nuclear or otherwise?

Hopefully people will learn from the best aspects of the USSR, throw out its worst aspects, and unite to begin the arduous project of building a new movement and a better world with opportunities for all.

PICTURES FROM OTHER TOURS I LED



My son Steven at party with women I met in Alma Atta in 1983, this was 1988 with new tour.



Lady from my 1988 tour, posing with statues in Moscow



My Son Steven about to sing, on 1988 tour.



I and my 1988 tour



1 and my whole group from first trip, tradeswomen



Girl performing at May Day gathering, first tour, tradeswomen, 1983



Boys' orchestra, Moscow, 1983, tradeswomen tour



Street scene in Ukraine



Peace poster



Peace poster



A tradeswoman, a friend from Alma Ata, and I on first trip



My daughter and other kids from first trip.



Three tradeswomen from my first trip



Horses' act at circus in Moscow



Woman worker holding Women in Trades T-shirt we gave out
in first Tradeswomen tour



Moscow gathering – World Peace for Children



Families at celebration in Moscow



Marching Band in Moscow Parade



Puppet Show, Kharkov Ukraine, next year's tour.



Pioneer Choir, Kharkov Ukraine, next year's tour



Dinner in Kishinev, Moldavia, 1988 tour –
my son Steven at front left.



Guy from 1988 tour at Kishinev Moldavia,
Sacramento's Sister City.



Outdoor Cafe in Kishinev, Moldavia, 1988 tour.