

My dear,

I would like today to dwell upon one or two false notions you have of the Soviets. Very natural from your point of view, but untrue in actual life.

There is no fear here of being well dressed. On the contrary. The better, the cleaner, the more unlike the others you are dressed, the more weight you carry in Soviet Society. If you are well dressed, you will be let in in a building quicker; you will buy a ticket without a queue; you will enter the buffet of a Railway station. The peasants and the workmen will give way to you. Otherwise, you have mighty little hope, for plain mortals are very many here, very many indeed.

One is judged here, my word of honour, by how one appears. I personally look more after my attire than ever before, especially if I go to some other place, or to interview managers, engineers, highly placed officials etc. Paradoxical? -----

Not so with eating. Here one has to be more careful. I should imagine if one was to see you "dining away" a respectful dinner here, one would simply stone you.

It is inadvisable to carry with one more than one day's bread ration. A whole loaf of bread that you may get perhaps for several days would cause such an event, that all passers by would stop and look at you. That is black bread. I can safely say that my life would be in great danger if I were to be seen in possession of merely one slice of white bread. Such a thing has not been seen here since 1928. Here on a wheat growing area! --

Five days ago, my landlady who is in charge of my "home" and takes daily bread on my bread card, stands daily in queues for 800 grms of bread (for which she gets portion of my unused bread) lost my card somehow. It meant something quite serious for me (do not laugh!). So I got off (rather, did not sleep that day) and at 12 went to Lugansk and bought two kilogram~~x~~ loaves of dark wheat bread at the Torgsin Store - opened a month ago. There was such an enormous crowd there, that though it was only 2 p.m. and the shop shuts at 5 p.m. a notice stood "closed" with a militia man at the door.

I, dressed in a leather brown overcoat with riding breeches, balaclava cap etc. was undoubtedly an impressive figure in amongst this motley of humanity and asked to see the manager. I was let in and was served in two seconds over the heads of others and let go with two fresh tasty breads.

I rushed out past the militia man to the envy of hundreds of less fortunates humans and ~~went~~ into the wet, muddy street. I had no time, nor the space to wrap the breads into "Pravda". So there was I, queerly dressed, with a leather portfolio and two breads. I was surrounded with street urchins, who begged for a tiny, for a bit, begged so as only Russians can, as men who starve slowly and consistently. Ha-ha-ha. ----- Find a man or woman here who who has a "corporation", or is even slightly fattish!!!!..... This makes me laugh! Only six months ago it was different. -----

I'd love to see a fat man here.

By the way, philanthropism in Russia is dead, dead as dead can be. Dozens of people will pass a beggar and never give a thing, though the unfortunate one may make you shudder with the shocking crippledness!! --- One man does not help the other, all and everyone for himself. ---

Religion is gone; no doubt about it, whatsoever. People do not think it necessary to talk about it, or to carry propaganda. All work on Sundays, Christmass days etc. and if you were to ask me what would happen to a religious objector, -- I would find it hard to answer you, there being no such objectors in life.

Or if you want ~~it~~ --- he would be fired off his job and as all jobs are State or Kolchoz jobs, his fate would be a very unenviable one. But thank heaven, there are no such people whose lot would be thus unenviable!!.....-----

What day is to-day? I do not know!..... I only know the date.

Russian civil servants are very impolite. Are sluggish, lazy,



half dead.

They are a most impolite lot; they shout and curse at an innocent illiterate peasant. They quarrel with the workmen. They try by all means to let you down, through laziness. They lie ! When you enter a shop and ask the assistant for a thing, she does not even lift her head from her book ! Barks out "Chertu" ! Get out ! -----

It was very queer to me at first ! I am used to it by now. They will never help you to find it; they will never tell you when they will have an article.

Everyone is a "Boss" here and wants the others to know that he is one !

Everyone fears responsibility and therefore finds safer to give a negative reply ! -----

Very ODD !-----

When you go to a Stolovaia with a friend, everyone strictly pays for himself, strictly to the farthing !

Russia does not dance, never, never, never !----- Russia does not sing, does not play Jazz, or anything else.-- Russia has no gramophones, portable or otherwise.-- Russian people have no cameras and buy not films.-- Russians go to Cinemas, never knowing what they will see. Russians take everything there they get.

Russia does not joke, does not laugh ! Russia has forgotten to laugh.

JERRY.

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COPY of a letter from Jerry dated 2/4/33 received at Tzaneen 4/5/33.

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My dear Israel & Leivi,

My successor on the "Lisia Balka" of Novosvetlovka has been arrested and taken to Lugansk on a series of charges.

The main trouble- the large losses in amongst our horses there. I understand that 6 horses died out of 17 due to rotten hay. Here at the moment the horse is more important than the man. (Remember that my own landlord was given 6 years jail for the horse that prematurely gave birth to a dead animal!--) People to keep themselves alive steal from their horses rations, especially mealies etc.

By the way, my "Chosian" has reached some Soviet farm not far from Kerchug where he undergoes hard labour on the state farm, sleeping in jail at night.---- A hard sentence this 6 years is for a "Zhavchoz" if due to the fault of his horseman, an accident happened to one of his flock !-----

Well, out of Novosvetlovka I managed to escape in time ! And as here at the Stanitza, the bridge is ~~not~~ finished and we fear nothing I hope not to be caught in the near future.----

Yesterday the chairman of "ATR" (i.e. bureau of engineers and technicians) when heated up called me "Kulak" and "Opportunist", accusing "Mostrotrest" of laziness and unwillingness to do scientific work.

I am taking this matter up with the Communist Head here, the Party Organizer at the Stanitza. And blood is going to flow, I assure you ! I have witnesses.

This constant struggle is great ! -----

But to tell you all, would take hours !

I doubt whether I shall be here long. Am waiting results from Moscow.

Enclosed, find my admission card for the Stanitza for March.

JERRY.