

TRAVELS



Cities traveled in the course of 1961-62

The southern trip from Moscow to Tbilisi, Sukhumi and Kiev took place in April, 1962. The trip to Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, was in June. I visited friends in several cities in Germany both on the way to Moscow in late summer of 1961 and on the way home a year later. (Circle sizes are roughly proportional to times spent at different locations.)

American Letters from Khrushchev's Russia

SURPRISING IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE
BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

DOUGLAS M. BOWDEN

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To
My Russian Friends
of
Fifty Years

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INTRODUCTION

It was the Fourth of July 1962 when I had the opportunity to shake hands with the Soviet Army officer who tipped the CIA to missiles that would be on their way to Cuba in a few months. I was with a group of US exchange students at the Ambassador's Residence in Moscow to celebrate Independence Day. Premier Nikita Khrushchev with a small entourage of Soviet officials called to offer congratulations. Among the visitors, we learned much later, was Oleg Penkovsky, the secret agent who was making first contact with an attaché of the US Embassy. During the ten weeks leading up to the Missile Crisis he would pass an immense amount of information on Soviet nuclear capabilities to US and British intelligence agents.

I was twenty five. I had taken a year out from Stanford School of Medicine to study psychophysiology in a Pavlovian laboratory at Moscow State University. This was one of a number of historical events that, largely unappreciated at the time, unfolded around me that year. Only now, half a century later, as I read through the letters that I wrote to family and friends do I recognize what a pivotal era it was in Soviet Russian-American relations and what a formative year it was for my world view.

In 1962, the Russians were two thirds of the way through the premiership of Nikita Khrushchev. That era was seen in the West as a peak in the Cold War. The Soviets had the atomic bomb. Many in the West believed that they had far more

intercontinental ballistic missiles than we. They launched the first satellite and put the first human in space. Such events fed a tense, widespread movement in the US to build bomb shelters in homes and to train school children in safety measures for a nuclear attack. The downing of our U-2 spy plane in May, 1960, the overnight appearance of the Berlin Wall in August, 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later all contributed to political unease in the US.

In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, those years were referred to as the 'Khrushchev Thaw', a warming trend in the Cold War. The attitude of Russians toward their government was as close to optimistic as it had been in forty years. Politics was less threatening, the tremendous personal and social burden of the Great Patriotic War (World War II) had lifted, the military budget was reduced by one third, the domestic economy had started to grow and the structural flaws inherent in collectivist economic philosophy had yet to become obvious. Khrushchev had toured the United States in 1959 and returned with new ideas for agricultural development in the 'New Lands' of central Asia. He created a slogan to the effect that within two decades the USSR would overtake the US in all areas of technical achievement, such as steel production, automobiles, washing machines, and agricultural productivity. This would complete the Soviet Union's transition from Socialism to Communism. I remember a statistical handbook that the Soviet government published in English and Russian for distribution at the American National Exposition that was

held in Moscow in 1959.¹ The inch-thick booklet contained page after page of graphs comparing the rates of growth in economic indicators between the USSR and the US. Each of the graphs showed the point at which an initially lagging growth rate in the USSR would overtake and surpass that in the US by 1980.

In August 1961 I stepped off the merry-go-round of typical med student life into a far broader sphere of experience. Reviewing events of that year from a fifty-year perspective has brought into focus the intriguing way that historical events and personal decisions interact to determine one's life trajectory. It has reinforced my awareness of how powerful an influence the Soviets' Sputnik Program was in determining my decision to go to Russia. Sputnik, the first man-made satellite, was put into orbit around the Earth by the Soviet Union in 1957. That historic event triggered a US catch-up effort that funded the establishment of Soviet studies and Russian language programs in universities throughout the nation. It fed my curiosity, leading me to minor in Soviet studies and to pursue the Russian language as I finished Harvard and started medical school at Stanford. In the spirit of the times the Ford Foundation funded the graduate student cultural exchange program of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), and the Rockefeller Foundation provided the personal stipend for my year at Moscow State University.

The personal motivation to take Russian and to live in Moscow, while an essential causal factor, was trivial in comparison to those historical factors. The decision was made in my junior year during a casual conversation with a friend,

¹ The US Exposition was the site of the famous 'kitchen debates', a televised series of spontaneous interchanges between Premier Khrushchev and Vice President Nixon on the relative merits of Capitalism and Communism.

David Arnold. We were on a train from Barnstable, Massachusetts back to Boston after a week-end visit with his parents. Dave had just landed a summer scholarship to an intensive Russian language program at the University of Michigan. As I had no plans for the summer, he suggested that I apply to the Michigan program. I had taken French and scientific German but could speak neither language. So, I agreed to begin Russian with a pledge to myself not to quit until I had gone to Russia and remained long enough to master the spoken language. The goal was set in that casual conversation. All events that followed resulted from integrating that goal with other plans I had for completing undergraduate studies in psychology and making it through medical school.

The old correspondence refreshed long-faded memories of my brush with historical events. On my way to Moscow I had spent a week in West Berlin but had totally forgotten going to the Friedrichstrasse crossing where the Berlin Wall had gone up less than a week earlier. On my arrival at the University in Moscow I noted the pride that Russian students derived from the U-2 incident, in which the Soviet military had shot down one of the high-flying US spy planes and captured the pilot, Gary Powers. I did not, at the time, place that incident in the history of photographic espionage: decades of pre-U-2 dependence on covert photography by land-based US intelligence agents and post-U-2 development of high-definition telescopic spy satellites as tools of international espionage. Attending a lecture by Yuri Gagarin, the first cosmonaut, shaking hands with Khrushchev in the Ambassador's garden, and reading in *Pravda* of Stalin's unceremonious removal from the mausoleum on Red Square were all experienced more as curious events in a *strannaya*

strana (Russian for 'strange country') than as banners of history unfolding around me.

As it turned out, I never went to the University of Michigan with Dave Arnold. I started Russian in an intensive summer course at Indiana University (IU), Bloomington, where I could live at home and pay in-state tuition. I continued to study the language through my senior year at college, first two years of med school and another summer at IU before leaving for Moscow. Altogether I had studied for the equivalent of four years. Nevertheless, it took three months of total immersion in Moscow before I was able to go shopping or enter a conversation in a new setting without half an hour of rehearsing the words and expressions I was likely to need.

When I left for the Soviet Union I had three goals in mind. First was to master spoken Russian. If all I brought home was fluency in the spoken language I would be satisfied. The second was to understand in a non-theoretical, non-political personal sense how the majority of more than two-hundred million people could maintain normal psychological function under a government intent on controlling every significant economic, political, philosophical and spiritual institution in society. If, in addition to fluency, I came away with a plausible understanding of the informal rules that allowed individuals to survive in such a nation, I would be more than satisfied. The third goal was to complete a worthwhile research project. Karl Pribram, my research mentor at Stanford, believed that Russian neuroscientists had a perspective on the relationships between the brain, cognition and behavior that would benefit Western psychologists and neuroscientists. I accepted the idea with reasonable enthusiasm despite the generally negative view of Russian neuroscience in the West. The prevailing view was that

some of the work from the labs of Pavlov and those who followed was probably excellent, but it was hidden amidst more that was mediocre, performed with insufficient animals and lacking adequate controls. Goal three was important, but had it been the only purpose I probably would never have considered going to Moscow.

Ultimately I made significant progress on all counts. By year's end I was able to serve as simultaneous interpreter for Soviet and US neuroscientists. I developed a concept of the interaction between politics and human nature sufficient to encompass normal psychological function in a society where the rights of government outweigh all individual rights as well as in our own society where certain individual rights outweigh rights of government. In the Soviet Union there was a law for everything, but enforcement was variable, depending on how badly the enforcing person wanted to punish an individual. In the absence of will to enforce, informal rules based on human empathy and sense of fair play often prevailed. By contrast, in the US the number of laws and regulations were many times fewer but more consistently enforced. The Soviet Union, second most powerful nation in the world, continued to be a tolerable civic environment for another three decades because of the slippage between the ubiquitous formal law and the informal rules of human interaction.

I also made progress toward the goal of completing a worthwhile research project. My first two research publications appeared in the Russian *Pavlov Journal of Higher Nervous Activity* the year after I returned to Stanford. In subsequent years I have participated in the translation of several books and a number of reviews and research publications on brain mechanisms of perception, cognition and behavior. More

importantly from a personal standpoint, I acquired a satisfying concept of the parallel relationship between the neural model and the mental model of reality, which only began to percolate into Western neuroscience with the advent of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) several decades later.

The reader may wonder why almost none of the descriptions of personal encounters include the names of the individuals involved. Participants in the US-USSR exchange program spent the summer before leaving for Russia at IU. There we received further language training and orientation sessions for the year ahead. Participants from the first three years of the program and State Department personnel advised what to carry and what not to carry, what to do and what not to do. Among the things we should avoid was talking with one Russian friend about experiences or discussions with another. Eight years after the death of Stalin, many of the most arbitrary and cruel practices of Stalinist political control had been abolished. The death penalty had been eliminated for all but 'economic crimes' and innocent people no longer had reason to fear a middle of the night knock on the door by government security officers who would deliver them directly to prison. Nevertheless, no adult who had lived through the Stalinist era could be assured that the old policies would not return.

We were told that the Soviet intelligence service, the KGB, which was the successor to Stalin's NKVD and forerunner of the current FSB, would certainly monitor our comings-and-goings. It would keep records of our contacts with Russian citizens, which could automatically be classified as 'suspicious activities' in their files. Soviet intelligence agencies always had the right to interrogate any person about information exchanged in such contacts. There was always the implicit

threat that withholding information would amount to self-incrimination. Any information we conveyed to one friend about another put both friends in potential danger: the first in danger of incrimination if he or she hesitated to divulge information; the second in danger of an incomplete, out-of-context record, which could emerge any time in the future and implicate them in an imaginary conspiracy.

We were informed that we could expect that any mail we sent or received through the Soviet postal service might be opened and read by censors, so it was not wise to name individuals or mention events that we would not be comfortable having recorded in government files. If we needed to send or receive sensitive information we would have limited access to the US Embassy's diplomatic pouch. The 'pouch' was in fact a huge canvas bag that traveled between the Embassy and the Moscow airport several times a week chained to the arm of an Embassy employee. We were instructed not to allow any information that we mailed to be published before we left the USSR.

A person from the US State Department further informed us that the Soviet government would assume that we were all potential spies. That suspicion was no doubt exacerbated by the research topics of many of the graduate students whose academic disciplines were Russian history, political science and literature. Access to materials for their research required that they obtain entrance to government archives, many of which were not freely available even to Soviet citizens. Furthermore, one or more exchangees in previous years had apparently been in contact with US intelligence agencies before they went to Russia. The Soviet government had learned of the contacts and threatened the

Kennedy administration with terminating the exchange program if such 'espionage' were not eliminated. In our year US intelligence agencies were forbidden 'at the highest level' to contact exchangees before they entered the Soviet Union. So, in addition to the expected warnings against Russian financial and sexual provocations, we were instructed not to respond to any attempt by US intelligence to contact us.

We were not prohibited from talking with US intelligence agencies after we returned from the Soviet Union. The CIA and FBI contacted me several months after my return. Their interests were quite different. The CIA was interested in observations on Soviet politics and foreign relations. The FBI was interested in espionage.

The CIA made contact first. The interviewer was particularly interested in whether I had witnessed anything that might clarify relations between the USSR and China. Soviet-Chinese relations had been deteriorating since the mid-1950s when Mao Tse-tung objected to Khrushchev's destalinization program. The breakdown became apparent to the rest of the world in 1959-60 when the Soviets unilaterally terminated a joint nuclear development program and withdrew technical support teams from China.

As a med student studying canine psychophysiology, I was hardly aware of such events. Nevertheless, my observations fit the pattern of a rapid dissolution of Soviet-Chinese relations. I had been told that a low sandstone building, which I could see half a mile from my dormitory window was the Chinese Embassy. (Google Earth indicates that it remains so today.) I had often noted that activity there was minimal to nonexistent. I had been told that the Chinese contingent of foreign students at the University, which had

been among the largest from any single country a year earlier, had shrunk to smaller than the Vietnamese contingent. Others told me that the absence of Chinese students was notable, because they had regularly massed for exercises before sun-up at the foot of my dormitory tower. They had been replaced by a much smaller contingent of Vietnamese students who assembled, same time of day, for the same purpose. I was told that the Chinese students had been pulled home because of financial collapse and famine in China. A colleague, who corresponded with a Chinese former student working at a research institute in China, told of food shortages so severe that dogs had disappeared from the city streets and that when workers at the institute completed a study they consumed their experimental animals.

While the CIA's interest was in generic observations and events that might be of international significance, the FBI's interest was in potential espionage. I was interviewed by two agents. They focused on the identities of individuals in the US, the Soviet Union or elsewhere in my travels who may have communicated an interest in obtaining sensitive information for the Soviet Union or who wanted to pass information about the Soviet Union that might be useful to the US. I could honestly say that I had encountered no such individual.

When the interviewers pressed me to provide the names of individuals who might hold 'dissident views' I responded in accord with the same principle that I had followed in the Soviet Union: don't talk to one friend about another, because you never know when, where or how the information will be used. I was happy to convey generic impressions of potentially significant events and opinions that I had heard from individuals in different social roles, such as students,

coworkers and professors. But I was not in a position to name names.

I have been to Russia many times since that year half a century ago. Many things have changed; many have not. The dramatic reversals in style of government that took place in 1917 and again in 1991 revealed which aspects of a society are controllable by government and which aspects represent a deeper cultural that persists through the most wrenching of political revolutions. Those contrasts are conveyed in short footnotes and longer italicized comments inserted into the text to which they relate. Some reflect significant modification of my early interpretations in light of subsequent historic events, such as the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the lifting of the Iron Curtain, and the replacement of a more-or-less equitable but inadequate state-managed economy by a more-or-less abundant but inequitable free-market economy.

Douglas M. Bowden
University of Washington, Seattle
25 September 2011

THE LETTERS

The third week in August, 1961, my parents delivered me to New York's Idlewild Airport, now JFK, for a flight to Berlin. It was my first time on an airplane, much less a jet. This letter was written from Berlin toward the end of a two week stay with the family of Ekhart Hefter, a German medical student and Fulbright Fellow whom I had met at Stanford.

* * *

Flights New York to Berlin First Impressions of Berlin West Berlin the Week the Wall Went Up

2 September 1961
c/o Hefter
3 Murellenweg
Charlottenburg 9
Berlin, West Germany

Dear Folks,

For the first time in a long time I felt as though I was doing something really new when that featherless bird you saw me board, backed out of its nest, and taxied down the tarmac. We sat for quite awhile at the end of the runway as several propeller planes came in. Then our plane rolled slowly into position, locked its wheels and revved its jets to rocket thrust. When the noisy vibration peaked, the brakes released and it felt as though we took off like a bullet. By the time the noise died to a hum, the houses and garden plots on Long Island looked like an exhibition model below. Within twenty minutes all we could see was blue below, a thin layer of clouds, and blue above. Another fifteen minutes and it was dark.

My seat partner was an old Canadian, originally from Czechoslovakia. He was on his way to visit Czech relatives whom he hadn't seen for more than thirty years. I talked to him and studied German for about three hours, slept a couple, and woke in time to see the French coast come into view. There were no clouds in the morning, but until we got near Paris one couldn't make out any detail of the landscape. It resembled low grade yellow-brown tweed with a few scattered moth holes... lakes I suppose.

I had a two-hour layover in Paris. My recurrent concern from that moment has been my ignorance of European languages. There's no medicine for ego-hypertrophy quite as strong as having to look constantly for someone who speaks your language when you only want a sweet roll, a newspaper or a men's room.

The flights from Paris to Frankfurt and on to Berlin were by four-engine propeller planes. We weren't as high as in the jet, which meant that I could distinguish lakes and roads from fields and cities from forests.

As I got into West Berlin's Tegel Airport and my luggage was checked, I suddenly wondered if Ekhart would be expecting me. Except for a telegram, which I sent from Paris, I hadn't tried to make contact since very early in the summer. This uncertainty was magnified by the fact that he was not at the airport when I arrived. In fact, except for half a dozen officials, the airport was empty. Since the closing of the

borders², traffic in and out of Tegel has been reduced to such an extent that they don't bother to open the restaurant and other parts of the passenger area.

Finally I changed some dollars into Deutsche Marks, managed to figure out how the phone worked and called the number Ekhart had given me last June. Sure enough, his mother answered. Apparently he had set out to meet me but took the wrong subway and ended up at the other end of the city. With his mother's instructions I took a subway and met him at Zoo Station, which, as a meeting place, corresponds roughly to New York's Times Square. Not that there are any sky-scrapers, but it seems to be at approximately the center of transportation routes in the Western Zone and lies at the head of Kurfurstendamm, Berlin's 5th Avenue.

I slept soundly that night and was up bright and early for a black bread, cheese and oatmeal breakfast at eight Wednesday morning.³ I'll just tell you what I've seen in random order.

Amerikahaus: an outlet of the US Information Agency I think. It offers a good library of American literature ranging from current journals to novels to reference books. Also it apparently arranges performances by American cultural groups, such as the Santa Fe Opera Co., which is to appear sometime soon.

² Unbeknownst to me, but now a prominent event in European history, the East Germans had unveiled the Berlin Wall and cut off the flow of East Germans through West Berlin to West Germany on Sunday, August 13, 1961, about a week before my arrival.

³ Probably Wednesday, August 23.

Olympic Stadium: built in haste by Hitler for the 1936 games, holds 100,000 and has a good swimming pool as well. That's where I'll probably spend much of my stay.

Tempelhof Airport: a good bit smaller than Idlewild with the main terminal fitted out in the style of New York's Grand Central Station.⁴ The interesting thing is that, unlike Idlewild it's situated right downtown.

Freie Universität of Berlin: major new buildings provided by the Ford Foundation; 13,000 students, half West Berliners, $\frac{1}{4}$ West Germans, and $\frac{1}{4}$ former East Germans. It remains for fall registration to tell how many of the East German students got out before the border closed.

Spandau Forest: on the border between West Berlin and East Germany. I rode out there by bike and got a look at some of the less well-to-do areas.

Brandenburg Gate and Russian Soldier Statue: you can approach within a hundred yards or so. The barbed wire is not so compelling a sight as that of two Russian soldiers strolling about the base. There is a park with lots of trees and lawns between Brandenburg Gate and the Kongresshalle. The British have pitched their tents and were in the process of digging trenches through the park while we were there.²

U-Bahn: 'U' for 'underground' train, gets a lot more business since everyone now boycotts the East-Zone controlled S-Bahn, S for 'schnell' (fast) train. Popular conception has it that the West German Marks made as profits by East Germany from operating the S-Bahn were used to purchase the stone and cement for the five-foot fence that the East has thrown up

⁴ Templehof Airport was the site of the Berlin airlift a decade earlier, 1948-49.

between the East and West sectors. The boycott is effective even though it is extremely inconvenient for a number of West Berliners. We waited for three buses one afternoon before one came that wasn't too full to take us along a route that was being run simultaneously by an empty S-Bahn train.

Friedrichstrasse Checkpoint: the interzonal crosspoint for foreigners.⁵ We visited there just as it was getting dark. West Berlin Police prevent anyone, other than those interested in crossing, from coming within a block of the Wall and checkpoint. At dusk the West-German street lights are lit. Several dozen people are out inspecting the four US tanks that stand on an empty lot in the second block away from the Wall. Hastily constructed counterparts to the American hot dog stand sit across the street from the tanks. The American tank crews lounge around shouting slightly veiled obscenities at one another and bragging about what they'll do if the East Berlin police pull something. Old Nazi soldiers come out and comment to one another about the crude construction of the American tanks compared to their own old Panzers. If you go a couple of blocks further along the border you can get up to within five yards of the wall on our side. Across the way, on the east side, there were very few lights in the windows. Apparently the day the Wall was built trucks came around with soldiers to move out the people living in apartment houses bordering the Wall. Their belongings and they themselves were tossed into open trucks and removed to some unknown destination.

I think that Khrushchev is more successful here than a

⁵ The Friedrichstrasse crossing was officially dubbed Checkpoint C by the US military. It became familiar in Western spy novels of the next several decades as 'Checkpoint Charlie'.

first look may indicate. Not only has the flow of refugees from the East stopped, but as long as he keeps the heat on, there's another less obvious change, namely, a shift of many young people out of West Berlin to West Germany. Ekhart, for instance, will probably leave Berlin, and as soon as his sister graduates from high school the rest of the family will move as well. The proportion of elder citizens in Berlin is already over-size, and with the flood of young blood from the East cut off, that proportion will grow. If any sizeable segment of the population gets the idea that they're in danger, the proportion of older people will go up, productivity will go down and the Allies may find themselves simply guarding a dried up pond a hundred miles deep into Communist East Germany.

Love,

Doug

**First Days in Moscow
Population Flight from West Berlin
Research Project on the Orienting Reflex
French Exhibition in Moscow**

Early September 1961

USSR⁶

Moscow

B-234

MSU

D-722

Dear Folks,

There are no direct flights from West Berlin to Moscow, so my trip here required back-tracking through Paris. I had an interesting twenty-four hour layover in Paris... took in the opening of the Soviet Exhibition there. Since Aeroflot, the Russian airline, does not fly Paris-Moscow every day, Air France put me up in a many-star hotel where I lived higher off the hog than anyone has a right to enjoy: four or five courses in every meal, a double bed with four pillows and a sumptuous private bath.

The plane from Paris was a Russian jet, the Soviets' answer to the Boeing 707. It's noisier and rougher, but the food suited my southern taste better than that on the Air France flights. My seat partner, a former German fighter pilot, pointed out landmarks on the coast that runs up along Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia toward Leningrad. The plane was otherwise choked to the gills with Frenchmen, many of them journalists, on their way to the French exhibition that just

⁶ Russian addresses list geographic units from largest to smallest. So the order was 'USSR', 'Moscow', 'B-234' (zip code equivalent), and 'MSU' for Moscow State University.

opened in Moscow. Shortly after we reached full altitude the ceiling began to sweat and drip. One fellow whipped out his umbrella while half a dozen others grabbed their cameras and ran up and down the aisle shooting pictures as a short stewardess tried unsuccessfully to wipe the ceiling dry. Eventually a taller steward came through and did the job.

There was a wisp of fine snow in the air when we arrived at Moscow's Sheremetevo Airport about 9:15 Tuesday night. Sheremetevo is about the size of the Greensboro Airport with one big post office style building and a couple of side buildings where customs and registration take place.⁷ The building interior resembles a Greyhound bus depot complete with decaying posters, unfinished oak woodwork and benches. The office of Intourist, the USSR's one and only tourist agency, is about 5' x 8' in floor area. A (Mr.? Comrade? I'm not clear yet on how to address these folks) Nazarov, from the university Foreign Office, met me at the plane and hustled me through registration and customs several times faster than any of the other passengers. Within two days I had my permanent room, 722, in the biology wing (D-wing) of the university dormitory and my *propusk*, a folded document about the size of a driver's license, necessary to pass in and out of university buildings. I met my advisor, Professor Sokolov, who already had an experimental project outlined for me.

* * *

Eugene N. Sokolov, known to Russian colleagues as 'Yevgenii Nikolaevich', was the forty-one year old head of a large psychophysiology laboratory at Moscow State University. He was recognized internationally

⁷ Greensboro, North Carolina, the largest city near Elon, the small college town where I grew up. We lived there until I was sixteen, when we moved to Bloomington, Indiana.

as an outstanding member of a young, post-World War II generation of Soviet psychologists. That reputation was based on research in which he showed that the 'orienting reflex', one's response to an unexpected event in one's environment, and its 'habituation', the disappearance of the response after several encounters with the same event, signifies the creation of a memory of the event. The habituation of the orienting response to novelty provided a physiological window onto one's mental model of external reality.



Eugene N. Sokolov (center) with colleagues, Nina N. Korzh, research psychologist (left), and Yuri P. Leonov, physicist-mathematician (right)

Methods developed in the course of his research continue to find wide application, most recently in exploration of the cognitive abilities of young infants. Using such techniques developmental psychologists are finding that, long before children can walk or talk, they recognize the cause and effect inherent in the movement of a billiard ball as it is hit by another. Similarly babies observing social interaction between adults are able to recognize who is in control.

In the decades following my year with Sokolov he and colleagues developed an elaborate mathematical representation of functional relations

between the brain's neural model of external reality, as reflected in electrophysiological activity, and the mind's mental model, as described verbally. His last book (he passed away in 2008) is being translated into English. Titled The Psychophysiology of Consciousness (Oxford Press) its focus is the neural mechanisms of conscious experience. He makes the case for 'consciousness neurons' located in association areas of the cerebral cortex of the brain, which must be activated for one to be aware of activity in the perceptual, emotional and intentional circuits in which they participate. If the consciousness neurons in a circuit are not activated its function proceeds unconsciously.

My time with Sokolov coincided with a shift in his laboratory from studying the physiological correlates of behavior and mental function, such as heart rate and respiratory rhythm, to recording electrical activity in individual neurons of the brain. I studied physiological correlates of the orienting reflex in dogs. David Lindsley, a postdoctoral fellow from UCLA who was there at the same time, studied neuronal activity in rabbits. David and his wife Betsy will appear several times in later letters.

* * *

Several things have made an impression:

- The extent to which I was expected and prepared for;
- The number of foreign students; they say one in six; it looks like almost half;
- The number of very attractive Russian women;
- The variety of clothing; it's not at all, as one might gather from our press, that every lady bought the same coat at the same state store at the same time ten years ago;
- How impossible it is to understand more than one sentence of conversational Russian at a time;
- Food and books, the only items I've bought so far, are extremely cheap; you couldn't spend more than two bucks a day for food if you wanted, and there's a big dish of free bread in the middle of every table in the university cafeteria, so you could get by on that and a glass of water;

--- Partly to avoid crowds and partly just from the way things work out I find myself having breakfast at eight, lunch at one or two and supper between eight and nine p.m.;

--- So far I've slept an average of ten hours a day; I hope that tapers off soon.

My situation in the Department of [the physiology of] Higher Nervous Activity looks pretty good, except that I'm afraid I'm going to turn out to be doing more lab work and less reading than I'd like. We shall see.⁸ I'm to learn how to implant permanent electrodes in the brain of a dog and how to operate the classical Pavlovian training and recording apparatus (including salivation monitor), assist in one experiment and carry out two experiments of my own during the next nine months. From this are to come two reports and possibly three articles.

The research problem is something like this: if you present a combination of sound, light, and tactile stimulation several times to an animal, or person, he gives an initial 'orienting response' (e.g., an ear twitch, skip of a breath, a characteristic shift in the pattern of brain waves), which gradually 'habituates' out with several presentations of the stimulus complex. Then you present the same pattern, only missing one component, e.g., the sound without the light, and the orienting response reappears. Apparently the brain expects one pattern of stimulation, a different pattern arrives, and it generates the orienting response. The question is: where in the brain is the neuronal model of the external world stored, i.e., where is the integrated pattern of sensory components detected

⁸ From the rest of these letters it will become apparent that my initial concern about inadequate time for extracurricular activities was overblown.

as a mismatch to the neural model? Is it at the cortical level, at the midbrain level, or at the lower brain stem level?

My second experiment will be to give drugs that are known to block activity at these different levels and see their effects on integration of 'the image' as judged by restoration or non-restoration of the orienting response to change in the pattern of stimulation.



Margarita M. Karimova was responsible for the Pavlovian apparatus where my studies were conducted and was my immediate supervisor.

My laboratory is full of hard working, apparently cheerful people. It will be a good experience to work where there's not

such a high degree of specialization as in a US lab. These people make their own electrodes, feed their own dogs, and analyze their own data with minimal benefit of lab technicians. Several want to practice their English, but I've begged off for a few weeks, saying it's better that I first get to where I can rely on my Russian. If I start speaking half English now I'll never learn to use my Russian in the tight spots.

I say the people in my group are cheerful, and I've no reason to believe that other groups aren't cheerful as well. But as in most any institution the general demeanor of the man on the street or in the hall is passive or glum. Friday one of the girls in the lab took me down to register at the Biology library. The librarian went through all the steps and forms for getting me a library pass and asked for a photograph. I handed one over, but it was given back shortly with the word that it wouldn't really be necessary. On the way back to the lab I asked the girl why my picture wasn't okay. She said, "Too big... and too happy." I guess you have to take this place seriously.

Yesterday I went to the French Exhibition. One impression was that both here and at an exhibition I had attended in Berlin, the rock and roll and Dixieland music draw the teenagers. No one else shows much interest. By the same token, popular dance music draws the college to post-college people and few others. I wonder how long it will be until



Library Reject

music isn't judged by an absolute standard but on some sort of a scale that takes into account the age-cohort of the listener.

Tomorrow I expect to go into town with another of the US students to buy some books, mainly dictionaries still. Within a couple of weeks I'll send a list of things I need. So far it only includes a couple more ball point pens like this.

Love,

Doug

Culture Shock and Cognitive Adaptation
Different Food
Strange Ways to Obtain It
The Dormitory Maze

Mid-September 1961
Moscow

Dear Folks,

How does this sound for a midday meal? Pickled mushrooms and onion salad, a large chunk of sour black bread, a glass of clabber and, for dessert, a cup of coffee and chopped apple tart. Sometimes I'm glad my mother taught me to eat first and think about whether you like it later. That just may keep me from starving this year.

Fortunately, I'm beyond the stage of going into the dining hall and ordering blind. First you place your order and pay for tickets, one per food item, at a kiosk outside the dining hall; then you stand in line to pick up your food. You can't just approach the food case and point to what you want. You have to order from a menu posted on the kiosk outside the dining hall. I recognize a few menu items now, but I still order something blind from time to time, just for the adventure of it and to broaden my range of known choices. For instance, I now know that 'beef steak' means hamburger; 'milk' means hot reconstituted milk; 'coffee' means half coffee, half milk, and half sugar; 'potato puree' means mashed potatoes; and 'soup', potato soup.

The timing of meals is much less uniform than in the US. Breakfast can be anytime from seven to ten a.m., not unlike home, but lunch can be anywhere from noon to four; supper anywhere from six to eight thirty. For breakfast I usually have

a couple of rolls (sweet or soft cheese in the center) and tea in my room. Lunch I pick up about one or two wherever I happen to be. The reason for my noon meal combination today was that the woman at the lab who takes care of the pups, cleans the glassware, etc. took my Timex watch home by mistake yesterday and, I think, was making up for it by bringing in lunch. Besides, she's been giving me a sweet from time to time.

If I eat in the students' cafeteria the food is lousy, i.e., about what you'd expect at an average US mental institution. On the good side, I can fill up on as much as I want for thirty or forty-five cents, e.g., large helpings of potatoes and boiled cabbage, four good-sized mystery-meat balls, gravy, a glass of hot tea and all the free bread I can eat. If I eat in the professors' dining room, a privilege of all foreign students, I get seated service and much better food, e.g., veal cutlet, potatoes, cabbage, a large bowl of tasty vegetable soup, tea and bread for eighty cents to a dollar. The same would cost a dollar fifty to two dollars at the Gables.⁹

I've felt much better during the past week than during the first week. It's been interesting to observe myself adapt. At first I was always very conscious of what I was doing, how and where to accomplish the simple routine tasks of everyday life. Where to go to eat? How to get the food when you get there? Which line to stand in first? What will be the reaction if you can't order fast enough? Should you ask or just assume you wouldn't understand the answer anyway and skip it... but if you skip it, when will you find out? How important is it to know? Look around to see what everyone else is doing; maybe

⁹ A family restaurant in Bloomington, Indiana.

just imitate them hoping our tastes are not too different.

During the first day such tactical considerations monopolize 100% of your time. The second day you've done some things already and a routine begins to develop; so such thoughts or sub-thoughts occupy only 75% of your time; the third day, 60% and so forth. Now I'm in a routine within which only 50% of the time is dominated by my orienting reflex. Against this background, if I go into the city to buy a book or see an exhibition my uncertainty level shoots up again. But now I know, not just consciously but in that silent shuffling part of me that prefers to wander familiar paths without thinking whether it's good, bad or indifferent... efficient, inefficient, or okay, that the uncertainty can be turned off. Now that part of me knows all it has to do is guide me to the nearest Metro station and shortly we'll be home.

I've met another of Dr. Pribram's friends,¹⁰ and he promises to be a very good contact. He speaks English very well but allowed me to stumble through my visit to his home in Russian. He's invited me to see the family dacha outside Moscow sometime soon, perhaps this weekend, and commandeered his daughter to show me through his two favorite museums.¹¹ He walked me to the Metro and pointed out an 'operating church' that isn't in the US Embassy tourist

¹⁰ Karl Pribram was my lab supervisor at Stanford. The friend referred to here was Alexander Romanovich Luria (see letter of 2 November). Pribram, a research neurosurgeon on the psychiatry faculty at Stanford, was head of the monkey lab where I worked as a technician during the first years of medical school. His meeting A.R. Luria and E.N. Sokolov at an international conference led to my working in Sokolov's lab during the year in Moscow. He also arranged the grant from the Rockefeller Foundation that supported me there.

¹¹ Dacha: Many Russians, particularly in the professions, have a small rustic summer house in the country side outside the city where they spend their long summer vacations.

guide, and a tremendous outdoor swimming pool, which is apparently open all winter... heated water, of course. I want to go there this weekend if we don't go to the country.¹²

Incidental observations on finding your way: it's frustrating to encounter buildings with multiple mammoth wooden doors and gates only to find that you can't go through any of them. Most are just for looks. You may be able to go through one, but it's not marked. More likely all are locked and a small, entrance of normal size is hidden off to one side. In the main thirty-plus floor building of the University you find six elevators, only one or two of which are in operation. The others aren't broken; they just sit, I suppose, to save electricity. Then, you find doors to stairways locked with no apparent rhyme or reason. This morning I wanted to get from the ninth to the eighth floor of my dormitory. I went down the stairs only to find the door from the stairwell onto the eighth floor locked. A woman on the stairs explained that I should go back to the ninth floor, take the elevator, which doesn't stop at the eighth, to the seventh, walk to another set of stairs at the other end of the building and climb them back to the eighth.

The entire American contingent is here now. We went to the US Cultural Attaché's apartment for dinner the other night. Among the more interesting guests was Howard Berman, a professor from Harvard Law School. He apparently ran into Khrushchev somewhere a few months ago and mentioned how worthwhile he thought it would be to spend a year at the big

¹² I did not make it to the pool that week-end, but did swim there that winter. While the water was far from clear, it was warm and the pool was huge. On cold winter days one could see it from miles away as the source of a great steam cloud rising from that part of the city. (For origin of the swimming pool see letter of late June 1962.)

juridical center in Moscow. He and his family are set up, under Khrushchev's directions, at the Hotel Ukraine. He has a VW bus, and travels in high circles... very interesting guy.

Well, I'd better get back over to the lab and give my dog an antibiotic injection; we did an operation yesterday.

Love,

Doug

Departmental Meeting on Curriculum

26 September 1961

Moscow

I sat in on my first departmental meeting today. Everyone from the head of the department to lowly graduate student attends. A person gives a report; discussion follows and they talk over what will be offered this year, by whom, and who's to take it. Sokolov spoke today. He presented some very interesting research from the Brain Research Institute at UCLA and indicated that the emphasis this year will be on quantification of experimental data. Classical Pavlovian data analysis is a very qualitative affair; all of the data from a study is presented, the reader inspects it and, guided by the text, draws his own conclusions.

For the first time starting next year courses in statistics, probability theory, and information theory will become a regular part of every student's program, and students will spend a good bit of their lab time determining what characteristics of the reactions they record most deserve quantification. For example, you know that the respiratory rhythm changes following a surprising stimulus, but what aspect changes most noticeably and most reliably: the rate, the amplitude, the rate of expiration, or the rate of inspiration?

Love,

Doug



**Moscow State University on Lenin Hills five miles south of the
Kremlin**

Russian is Tough Lecture in Pavlovian Dogma Gifts and Mailing

13 October 1961
Moscow

I got your letters of the third and sixth together on the thirteenth. That's pretty fast. I think they hold them at this end until they have a batch, read them all at once, and then distribute them.

Everything's going fine here. But I just don't get things done the way I'd like. After four years including two intensive summers of studying Russian at home, I had hoped that within six weeks I wouldn't have to worry about the language anymore. But I still can't carry on a conversation without interrupting every third sentence to run down a word. The short colloquial comments, commands, and general off-the cuff give and take that makes up a large part of everyday speech don't get through to me at all. I never comprehend more than 80% of a lecture and I have to concentrate so hard to understand that I can't take notes.

Nevertheless I've started to move out and see other places. I went to the Institute of Neurosurgery Wednesday and sat in on the review of a misdiagnosed case. Everyone from the diagnostician and surgeon to students from Vietnam, Germany, Poland, and USA (me) were present. I've been to lectures at the Institute of Psychology and Institute of Physiology and made arrangements to go back and talk more with people later.

The most interesting event of the week was sitting in on

a lecture ostensibly on the Pathology of Higher Nervous Processes given by an old fellow of the Praise-be-to-Pavlov school. It turned out to be a series of anecdotes about interesting experiences and habits of people and how they relate, at least by analogy and with some stretch of the imagination, to Pavlovian theory. The most interesting part of the lecture was an opening fifteen minute diatribe on "American Neuropathology, Freudian theory or, as we call it here, Freudian falsehood... American scientists know very little about the pathology of higher nervous activity... and that's putting it gently..." The lecturer indicated that scientific facts can be established by objective observers without regard to geography... "in the Soviet Union or by our friends in the Socialist Camp, or even in the Capitalist Countries." His tone was not aggressive, merely dismissive. I don't know that he was aware that I was in the audience. After the lecture I talked with him awhile about my stay here, about the department, etc. He is quite congenial, informal and very conscious of the omniscience of Pavlov. His lectures will be good practice for me in understanding conversational Russian.

If you haven't sent the ball point pens yet, please don't for awhile. I should have told you earlier not to send packages till you hear what I need. I can receive only one duty free package every three months, and duty runs anywhere from 100% to 1000% of purchase value. If you've sent the pens already, it'll be a good experiment. Maybe they'll come through regular mail and not as a package. Incidentally, books don't count in this rule. I can receive books as often as I like.

If you haven't sent the pens yet you might make up a package including them plus:

- 1- Half a dozen small white buttons for button-down collars. I popped and broke one;
 - 2- Some ball point pens with different colors of ink and thin points. They're handy for drawing graphs;
 - 3- A pencil sharpener, the type that screws to a desk or wall. Our department could use it;
 - 4- A couple of nice pens or necklaces, one for my language teacher and one for the woman I work with at the laboratory, both in their early thirties. Anyone who says people here are not aware of what it means to be well dressed hasn't spent much time around the University. Women don't dress as flashily and there's not as much paint as in the US, but the majority of teachers, technical people and upperclassman students dress in very good taste.
 - 5- Eight or ten post cards of Bloomington and IU. You might just send them in an envelope or as letters through the mail. Do **NOT** send anything that might be classified as medicine, food, electronic equipment, recording tape, film, etc. – I'm not even sure the pencil sharpener will get through. You might apply the enclosed label just for luck – it says in Russian “device to sharpen pencil”. I don't need any clothes, but if you send some make it a pair of normal weight wash and wear pants, waist 33, length 33. Make sure you leave all the tags on; otherwise they'll send the package back. Don't ask me why they don't allow shipment of old clothes. Thanks for shipping the stamps and news of the world.¹³
- It's refreshing to drop in at the Embassy every couple of weeks and read a *New York Times*, eat a hamburger, and pick up a roll

¹³ With US postal stamps I could send letters and small items through the US Embassy.

of toilet paper.

Love,
Doug



Stamps and envelopes from the Soviet Union were quite fancy. The left half of the envelope always expressed a current source of Soviet pride. This shows G.S. Titov, their second man in space. The caption reads 'Glory to the Pilot-Cosmonaut of the USSR - Hero of the Soviet Union.'

A Typical Day at Moscow State
Linesmanship
Political Philosophy Seminar

23 October 1961

Moscow

Dear Haydons,¹⁴

I appreciate your taking the initiative to write. Every other day I say to myself, "Now is the time to write the Haydon's," but something always comes up. I have to prepare a little speech for my Russian language class¹⁵ regarding, for example, "Who has access to and can afford a college education in the US?," or "Describe some new discoveries in your field of study." Or I have to analyze an EEG record to see whether my dog showed orienting responses to sounds other than 500 cycles per second, or I get hold of some pamphlet about the poor people who have to live in America that I can't wait to read.

¹⁴ The Haydons are the friends and family with whom I lived during most of my years at Stanford. They had a large home in Atherton about a mile north of the med school. They provided a room for service, many a wonderful meal and enduring friendship in return for a modest amount of monitoring six kids, yard work and assorted odd jobs.

¹⁵ Classes in Russian as a second language were provided by the University. They met weekly and were organized by discipline. Since I was the only English speaking student in Biology I was placed with students from East Germany. I became aware of the extent to which similarities and differences in the articulatory patterns of the sounds in one language influence the difficulty of learning another. For instance, the Germans had no problem mastering the Russian 'sh' and 'kh' sounds, which are common to German. I needed the whole year to master 'kh', and I didn't master the Russian 'sh' for another forty years. On the other hand the Russian diphthongs 'yah', 'yeh', 'yee', 'yoh', and 'yoo', which correspond to their hard vowels 'ah', 'eh', 'ee', 'oh' and 'oo', came more naturally to an English speaker from the American South than to the German students.



Working in my dormitory room, breakfast in hand.

I live on the seventh floor of one wing of Moscow University, a thirty-two story skyscraper standing on a rise above the Moscow River. The building was built just as Stalin went to his Great Reward, and since that time the whole area is under development. There are now a dozen blocks of the surrounding area being built up in apartment buildings, stores, etc., primarily to serve the university community I gather. I live quite comfortably in a 7'x12' room with a bed-divan, writing table, bookcase and plenty of storage cupboards. My window looks down on a courtyard where I can watch the Vietnamese and Chinese students playing a version of kickball every morning about seven. A fairly large percentage of the Soviet students, men and women, get out early for a run around the athletic field before breakfast. On the whole, they're a healthy crew.

I eat either in the students' cafeteria (my guess is that it's nearest counterpart in California would be the dining hall at Alcatraz) or in the professors' dining room, where you are served at a table with white table cloth and can get a very good meal with sherry if you like. Without sherry it runs less than a dollar; 100 grams of sherry costs 90 kopecks (about a dollar). In both places you get all the tea, bread, and chopped cabbage you can eat for free.

I keep groping for generalizations about this place, but there are no good ones. It's easier just to talk in terms of specific events. Almost every day something interesting turns up. Today it happened during lunch. I was eating in the cafeteria with a couple of women from the lab, one of whom takes care of cleaning up the lab and mothers the dogs through their post-operative recovery. She has a perfect maternal combination of plumpness, arbitrary authority and tender loving care. That is, she has highly developed capacities for alternately chewing out some person or animal and then dissolving all hard feelings in gentleness and diminutives.

Today she was in a chewing out mood. When we sat down in the professors' dining room she noticed that the bread plate, which stands in the middle, was littered with pieces of broken or half eaten hunks of bread. She skidded her chair back from the table, disappeared into another room and came back with the hostess of the dining room. Leading the woman by the arm, she pointed to the bread plate, explained to her the role of a public servant in an institution of higher learning and obtained a fresh plate of bread. The other woman from the lab explained to me that she, the plump enforcer, often assumes this role of 'social inspector'. According to the morality of work or moral code of labor, or whatever it's called, you're supposed

to always do things right. If you don't, everyone else has a moral obligation to engage you in *kritika i samokritika* (criticism and self-criticism), i.e., to point out your deficiency and give you the opportunity to repeat it back, preferably with suitable expression of appreciation. It's from exercise of the *kritika* obligation that my friend gets her kicks.

One of the funny things about such an incident, or any incident in which I find a Russian express dissatisfaction, is that I can never anticipate where that attitude is going to pop up. For instance, whereas my friend was upset by the presence of bread in pieces instead of whole slices, nobody notices that the forks are bent totally out of shape, or that the tables and chairs are so close together that one can't get through without tripping over somebody and spilling one's soup, or that the glasses are greasy and the corn still has a healthy coat of silk.

Something that anyone coming to the Soviet Union will inevitably do is stand in a few lines. Not only do they have lines where we don't; but where we have lines, they have two or more: one to get to the counter to determine the price, a second at the cash register to pay, a third back at the counter to pick up the purchase. According to the rules of the game, if you see somebody you know already in line you may join him. Generally I find myself at the end of a line of extremely popular people.

To a certain extent the line plays the same role here as the price plays at home. If there's a long line the product is probably something well worth having, but the length of the line makes purchasing it impractical. If there is no line the product is there, but probably not worth having. What you look for are mid-sized lines. A very short line for a good item is comparable to a sale in the States. Even if you don't need the

product you can't afford to pass it up.

Everywhere you go there's a line: cafeterias, book and magazine counters, grocery counters, libraries, taxi stands, movie theaters... The presence of so many lines doesn't mean that people move slowly, however. They don't walk to get into line, they run; and the person serving doesn't slow down for a minute; she scurries. Sometimes I get the impression that there must be an efficiency expert that spends his days looking for places without a line. When he finds one he immediately removes half the service personnel from the site, so that a good healthy line can form.

There are several fine points to linesmanship that everyone must know.

1. If your purchase is small and you know how much it costs you may succeed at going to the head of the line, laying down your kopecks and receiving your cigarettes or whatever. Whether this is successful depends upon:
 - A) your sex and strength of voice; often a pretty face or a good loud voice will match as much as six feet six of height;
 - B) the size, aggressiveness, and mood of the first person in line;
 - C) the mood of the sales girl; you may be ignored while four or five line members get through, then be served before the sixth; you have to be able to weigh the probability of that occurrence against the length of the line.
2. If you know a person who is already in line you may step in beside him, strike up a conversation and at the last moment step to the counter before he does. If, as happened to me one day, you find yourself at the end of a long line outside the professors' dining room, you may never be served, because almost anyone who comes after you will find someone he knows ahead of you. So the line grows longer instead of

shorter while you back deeper into the lobby to make way for more friends. I'm sure this custom is responsible for the birth of many a good friendship. A person can join somebody in line, whom he would never talk with otherwise. He has to strike up a conversation in order to give the intrusion legitimacy in the eyes of people further back. I suppose that if a guy were really hard up for friendships he could go from one line to another all day and garner new friends at every turn.

3. Finally you have to learn how discretely to elbow others aside. A less common but effective technique is that of the girl who steps up to a line along a counter, ostensibly to peer between two others at what's displayed there. Suddenly she whirls about as though in search of someone who has called her name from afar. In so doing she knocks some poor guy off balance. In the confusion of picking up dropped fruit, nuts and broken glasses, she helps set things back in place. When order is restored, there she stands staring wistfully into space, two steps from the salesgirl.

I don't get into as many challenging political discussions as I was afraid I might. I feel lucky to be in Biology rather than in History or Philosophy, which are highly politicized. Our department has a philosophy seminar every couple of weeks. The chairman of the department conducts it in a spirit of openness that makes it very interesting to attend. Apparently last year they had a fascinating and stormy series of discussions on such topics as Freudianism and Neopositivism. This year, in honor of the 22nd Communist Party Congress, the seminar is focusing on more push-button political issues, such as 'The Importance of the Material Base for Communism', and 'The Transitions from Capitalism to Socialism and Socialism to

Communism'.

Especially interesting was a discussion of whether the strong Capitalist countries will be able to make the transition to Socialism without a revolution. Points of view seem to correlate with the personalities of the persons offering them. The gregarious, extroverted, sense-of-humor types seem to think we can do it. The more sober, serious types seem to think it's impossible for parliamentary procedure to provide a mechanism for the transition. In their view we capitalists will just have to suffer through a bloody revolution... it's a fact of life and history. Supporting evidence cited: the last time the French government dissolved the Communists won a majority; then De Gaulle took over and rewrote the constitution giving the Communists only one tenth the number of seats they had won. I'd like to find out to what extent that's true the next time I run into an American student of European history.

* * *

I never ran into that student. Looking up the history of the French Communist Party (FCP) more recently, however, I found little resembling this description. The Party was, indeed, very popular at the end of World War II, 1945. It had played a much appreciated role in the French Resistance to German occupation and emerged as a strongly unified, moderate movement that was relatively independent of Moscow. The FCP was one of the three largest parties whose coalition controlled the provisional government immediately after the War; the others were the Socialist and Gaullist parties. De Gaulle had a significant role in that government. It ruled until early 1946 when he resigned in objection to the newly drafted constitution, which provided very limited power to the chief executive.

The closest the FCP came to legal control of the government was in November, 1946, when it won the largest number of votes (28.8%) of any party, including the Socialists and Gaullists, in the National Assembly. It nominated its leader for Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers but was unable to put together a coalition large enough to win the seat. The Socialist candidate was elected to that post. De Gaulle was not in the government at that time.

The FCP continued to play a strong role in the Council of Ministers until May 5, 1947 when the Socialist Prime Minister broke up the three-way coalition, which transformed both the FCP and the Gaullists into opposition parties. Historians cite several reasons for the break-up of the three-party coalition. The FCP refused to join the others in the coalition in support of a wage freeze during the existing period of hyperinflation; it refused to support the country's attempt to reestablish colonial control over Vietnam; and, likely due to pressure from Moscow, opposed the French government's application to join the Marshall Plan. At least one source claims that the US made France's inclusion in the Marshall Plan contingent on exclusion of the FCP from the Council of Ministers.

In any case, the collapse of the three-party governing coalition contributed to a rapid rapprochement of the FCP with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Within a few months the FCP evolved from a popular moderate contender to a radical force in French politics. In September 1947 it participated in the first meeting of the Cominform, which Stalin established to recapture the allegiance of international Communist parties that had drifted out of Soviet control during the War. In November the FCP led unions that it dominated into violent attacks on government targets and into strikes that ultimately idled three million workers in Paris. Fearing a general insurrection the Socialist Prime Minister resigned. Less militant members abandoned the Party, and it never regained the influence that it had enjoyed in the early postwar years.

De Gaulle remained on the sidelines until 1958 when the constitution was rewritten to include a stronger presidential office. He was elected then and served as President for the next ten years.

* * *

An amusing incident: I had supper the other night with an English literature student who claims to be an anarchist. I asked him if he didn't think maybe he'd come to the wrong place. He said there are two types of anarchy: organized chaos

and unorganized chaos; here you have unorganized chaos.

Love,

Doug

**Tour of ZiL Truck Factory
Artist-Cyclist-Icon Collector
Luria's Apartment**

2 November, 1961

Moscow

Dear Folks:

Every once in awhile a day comes along that you don't expect to be much different from usual but that turns out to be unique. Today was such a day. I woke up slowly starting at seven a.m. and reached a standing posture by about seven-thirty. I took a shower, worked forty-five minutes on a speech I was to give tonight and then joined the American student group for a tour of a local truck factory.

That was a worthwhile experience. I can't wait to visit Detroit and do the same at the Ford plant. This factory is where ZiL trucks, eight-ton variety, are produced, and it's something of a show place. The entrance sports a panel glass front with a huge clock above the door. Out front is a little garden with a bust of Stalin, which is probably not long for this world considering the disappearing act he pulled at the mausoleum night before last.¹⁶

When you enter you mount a palatial stairway. The stairwell is large and light blue; the risers of the stairway are purple, about the shade of a four-cent Lincoln stamp. The mezzanine to which it leads is located behind the glass wall. From there, you get a good view of the clock works. There is a long modern table with many chairs where twenty people can sit and learn about the plant. The room is decorated in modern

¹⁶ See letter of 22 November.

style in that the walls are all different colors of off-shade green, yellow, chartreuse, purple, etc.

Our guide was a former engineer, now a public relations man, who had lived in the States for a year after the War, working in Ford plants in Detroit. He told us that this plant puts out 300 ZiLs a day, one every two and half minutes. That may be an estimate of maximal rate of production. The line was down part of the time while we were there. Nevertheless, it's an impressive establishment. Later we got into questions about wages, labor-management relations vis-a-vis plan fulfillment, etc. Some of the questions went unanswered, because, as the guide informed us at one point, he knows "everything good" about the operation of the plant.

As one goes from a cafeteria up a flight of winding stairs to a main milling room, one passes a shrine set in a small alcove at the first landing. Potted plants surround a little platform on which stands a bust of Lenin. Above the bust is a red banner with something to the effect that Communism is just around the corner, Glory to Lenin. Some of our group felt inclined to kneel and make the sign of the hammer and sickle. One suggested it would be interesting to make our next excursion to a Lenin bust factory. There must be a dozen of them.

It was interesting to note how many women work at very heavy jobs, especially at the lathes and milling machines and in the casting rooms. The factory used to make cars and buses in addition to trucks, but now the only sidelines are refrigerators and air conditioners. One of our group suggested that when the leaders of this cold country find out what those devices are designed to do they may be surprised; in fact, some planner is apt to be broken a couple of ranks for initiating such projects.

During the return trip our representative from the Foreign Office told us that our group will receive two tickets to the Revolution Day parade on Red Square November 7. There are twelve of us, not counting wives, so we drew lots; and I got one! Students who've been downtown around midnight during the past couple of weeks have noted tanks and artillery roaring around the Square, apparently rehearsing for the big event. It should be something. So, second good experience of the day!

When I got back I worked on my speech for a couple of hours. It was about Pribram's experiments on the function of the frontal lobes.¹⁰ I later gave it to a student group at the Psychology Department. Psychology is a department in the School of Philosophy, which is located in the old Moscow University buildings downtown, a couple of stone-throws from the Kremlin. There appeared the third good luck of the day. The faculty adviser of the group turned out to have a position at the neurosurgical institute. He was quite interested in the work I described and invited me to give the same talk for a group at his institute. After the meeting he also introduced me to the head of the Psychology Department whom I'd heard a lot about but hadn't met yet.¹⁷ Then he invited me to his apartment for tea and pastry.

On the way to his place, we dropped in on a friend of his whose son-in-law is an artist. A month ago, the son-in-law took an 800 or 900-mile bicycle trip well north of Leningrad to the White Sea in search of icons and other art objects. He returned with treasures that any American museum would pay thousands for. There were a number of pictures and half-

¹⁷ The faculty advisor was A.R. Luria who, together with Sokolov, had been instrumental in arranging my position at MSU (see below). The chairman of the Psychology Department was A.N. Leontiev.

mosaic pictures from the fifteenth century, all in virtually perfect condition. Also, a four-foot wooden Christ statue, which he says must be from the seventeenth century or earlier. Apparently statues were forbidden in Russian Orthodox churches after the seventeenth century. Fourth unforeseen adventure of the day.

Finally, I went to his home, met his family, and a science journalist who was visiting. He showed me his library, including half a dozen books I'll want to get, and his collection of souvenirs from all over the world: vases from China, rugs from India, plates from Japan, and a Stanford banner on the wall behind his desk. He has traveled widely in the last four or five years and is quite an accomplished individual. When I meet a person like that I feel like I want to see everything there is to see and learn everything there is to learn. So, all in all, today was an unusually successful day.

I'll never get everything done here that I want, but it's interesting trying. I'll be glad when I can talk jargon and prepare for a speech without harboring butterflies in my stomach for forty-eight hours preceding the presentation. So far, I've done two and both went okay.

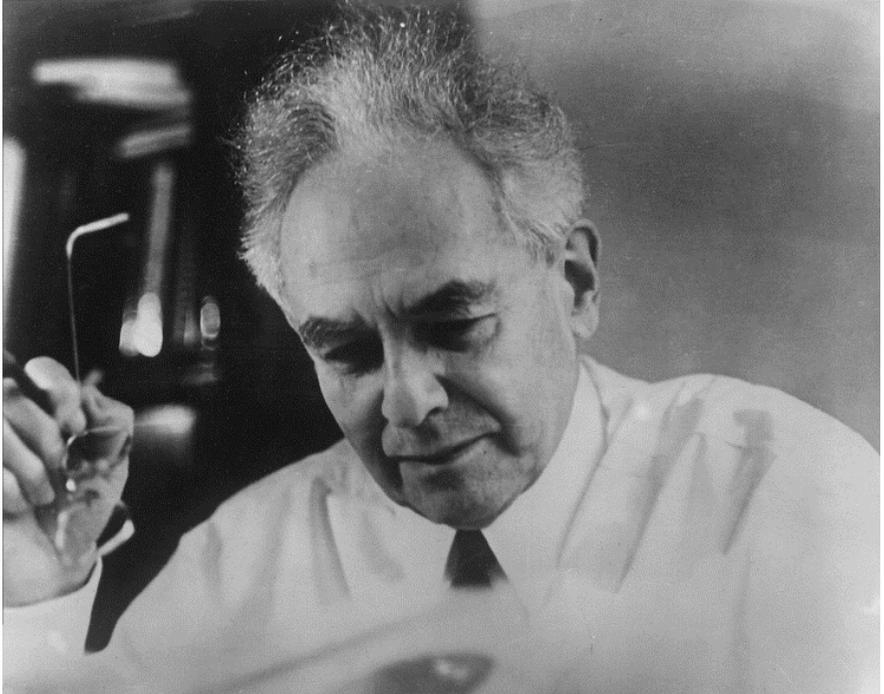
Love,

Doug

* * *

As with Sokolov, my contact with Aleksandr Romanovich Luria grew out of their previous interactions with Karl Pribram, my research supervisor at Stanford. The three had met at an international conference about 1960. He and Sokolov agreed with Pribram to arrange an exchange of Russian and US graduate students who would work in their respective

laboratories. Dr. Pribram knew of my interest in Russia and offered to sponsor me from the US side. Professors Luria and Sokolov sponsored me from the Russian side. While most of my time was spent in Sokolov's laboratory, I had a certain amount of contact with Aleksandr Romanovich in his clinical lab at the Burdenko Neurosurgery Institute and in his home. He was one of the most broadly knowledgeable, intellectually stimulating and energetic individuals I have known.



Alexander R. Luria in his study. He lived with his wife Lana, a physician, in an apartment across the street from the 'Old University', downtown near the Kremlin.

Throughout Luria's career most behavioral scientists in both Russia and the West regarded the mind as outside the realm of scientific analysis. To Pavlov the mind was an immaterial, unmeasurable epiphenomenon of brain function. To Skinner it was an 'explanatory fiction' for behavioral phenomena that were more effectively understood in terms of conditioning and reinforcement contingencies.

While I never knew Luria to express it exactly so, his scientific approach reflected a conviction that mind-brain relations are open to experimental analysis, that an analysis involving the mind must include conscious experience as a real variable, and that a person's verbal description is every bit as objective a measure of conscious experience as the leg-lift is a measure of 'activation of a neural circuit' in Pavlov's dog or pecking a colored disk is a measure of an 'operant response tendency' in Skinner's pigeon.

Virtually all of Luria's research was conducted in real-life situations. His studies of physiological measures of psychological stress under conditions of imprisonment (The Nature of Human Conflicts) find continued, if sometimes questionable, application in the lie detector test and in the 'clearing' procedure of Scientology. His comprehensive studies of language disorders in war victims with brain damage due to shrapnel and bullet wounds (Traumatic Aphasia) continue to be a major basis for the evaluation of brain lesions in clinical neuropsychology. His field studies in Central Asia on the influence of language, culture and historical events on cognitive development continue to contribute to a major theme in socio-psychological research.

To the general public Luria is best known for English translations of his detailed studies of individuals with supermemory (Mind of a Mnemonist) and unusual psychological effects of brain lesions (Man with a Shattered World). These he reported in a style similar to that adopted by the British-American neurologist Oliver Sacks in works such as The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat. During his last years Luria carried on a mutually stimulating correspondence with Sacks. The world lost a great mind when he passed away in 1977.

* * *

Red Square Parade Dealing with Stalin's Errors

6 November 1961
Moscow

Dear Folks,

I'm afraid the news in my last letter about winning the Red Square Parade lottery was a bit premature. In a not uncharacteristic move the Foreign Office scuttled it. After letting us go through the rigmarole of drawing lots they gave only one ticket to our group and that went to the one woman... the only member who isn't interested in going. She already had tickets for the opera that day. Use of the Red Square ticket requires a show of passport, so no one but she can use it. I'll be watching the military parade on TV.

I picked up a copy of *TIME* magazine at the Embassy last time I was there. After several weeks' acclimation to this atmosphere of enthusiasm, energy, and conviction that Lenin's baby is finally becoming the giant he foretold it was refreshing to read about events in the Soviet Union from an unabashedly US point of view. For the first time I can remember I read every word, cover to cover, ads and all. For twenty years my cortex has been wired and rewired to accept information of certain forms, shapes and sizes, and it was a relief to run something through that machinery that really fit for a change. Reading a report of the Soviets' resumption of nuclear tests written with a good portion of self-righteous indignation was refreshing; reading about Khrushchev's opening speech to the 22nd Congress with one-tenth facts and nine-tenths disdainful commentary soothed my tortured Western Allies soul.

It's interesting to discuss Stalin's errors with various people. The couple of students I've talked to are perplexed that conditions under Stalin could have been so bad that people like Politburo member Ordzhonikidze and Stalin's son-in-law

would have committed suicide.¹⁸ To try to convince them that comparable 'errors' may quietly be occurring now is hopeless.

Love,

Doug

* * *

*G.K. (Sergo) Ordzhonikidze was a Georgian medical school graduate turned revolutionary, Bolshevik and, in 1926, a member of the ruling Politburo of the Soviet Union. He is credited with having brought the peoples of the Caucasus, such as the Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis, into the Soviet Union. He worked closely with Stalin until his death during the purges of 1937. The official cause of death was heart attack. The claim that Ordzhonikidze had committed suicide was made public by Khrushchev, most recently at the 22nd Party Congress, and was being reported in Moscow newspapers at about the time this letter was written. More recently the likelihood has been expressed that his death, like that of Trotsky and many others of the original Bolsheviks, was instigated by Stalin (see E. Radzinsky's book *Stalin*, Doubleday, 1996).*

* * *

**Stalin Exits the Mausoleum
Gagarin Lectures at the University
Nixon on Russians' Desire for Peace**

22 November 1961

¹⁸ If the students I talked with were twenty years old, they would have been about twelve when Stalin died. So ignorance of such events from the 1930s and 1940s was understandable.

Moscow

Dear Al, Thea and Avram Fefer,¹⁹

It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is upon us. The days and weeks lose all seasonal heterogeneity when one is plopped down in a strange calendar. We celebrated Revolution Day a couple of weeks ago, but that didn't particularly connote 'autumn' for me. One of the Embassy wives recently mentioned her kids' Halloween, and just hearing the word was like meeting an old friend, kind of like coming across 'trapezius muscle' for the second time in anatomy. I had even forgotten football existed. Strange cocoon we're in here.

As you no doubt know by now, they recently took Stalin out of his not-quite-final resting place. Such events are not widely discussed here. I talked about it with one student, the equivalent of our sophomore in age, our junior or senior in mentality. He, as everyone, is glad about the removal of the Body from the tomb and of the earlier removal of Molotov from

¹⁹ Alex Fefer was a friend and premed classmate at Harvard, a med school classmate at Stanford, fellow postdoc at NIH and a fellow faculty member for some forty years at the University of Washington. When I wrote this I knew that he had been born in Russia, in Moscow I assumed. Only in the last ten years did I learn that he was born and lived his first five years in a village in Siberia. His mother had moved there to be near a labor camp where his father was imprisoned. It was the early 1940s, the first peak of internments in the Soviet Union's *gulag* policy, under which more than 1,400,000 people were held for crimes, real or imagined by the NKVD. At the end of the War Alex's mother managed to escape with him through Poland to Germany where they were classified as displaced persons. In 1948 they immigrated to Brooklyn where he attended an elementary yeshiva for a couple of years, then public school until 1955 when he entered Harvard College.

the political scene.²⁰ All are happy that the Personality Cult and the injustices that went with it have been wiped out. I suggested allowing Molotov to air his side of the story in the public press, but the student thinks it's better that such things not be thoroughly exposed. He's confident that everyone that needs to know, in order to correct past abuses of power and to prevent future abuse, knows. Nothing is to be gained by informing the public at large.

In general my set-up here is excellent, as good as or better than I had hoped. After ten weeks I'm getting to where I can understand lectures well enough to take notes. When I crack an occasional pun, it isn't automatically interpreted by my Russian colleagues as a sign of linguistic ignorance. Contrary to some predictions, I find you can argue politics or not, as you like. Discussions seldom get out far or in deep. Sometimes it's fun, but sometimes it becomes tedious. You'd just as soon argue with a tape recording of a Radio Moscow news commentary.

My lot is somewhat easier than that of the US students in Russian literature or history. I have the advantage that the material that I and people in my department work with is free of official political interpretation.

Last week Yuri Gagarin spoke at the University.²¹ The crowd was overwhelming. The last time we had such a popular

²⁰ V.M. Molotov was one of the very few Old Bolsheviks to survive the purges of the late 1930s and early 1940s. He was best known in the West as Stalin's Minister of Foreign Affairs during World War II and the early years of the Cold War. He fell out of favor with Stalin and was removed from that position in 1949. After Stalin's death in 1953 Molotov returned to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, which he held until 1957. Then he was again demoted for plotting to depose Khrushchev.

²¹ Gagarin was Russia's first cosmonaut. The first human in space, he had made his flight in April, 1961, five months before my arrival.

speaker was in October when the University hosted an Italian scientist that had fused egg and sperm in a bottle and cultivated a human embryo for three months. The student crowd was as exciting as the event itself. There are always a suitable number of tickets, but a crowd of non-ticket holders gathers nonetheless. Those with tickets have literally to fight their way to the door in order to flash their tickets and enter. The tickets are not collected, so once inside many students wander around asking others for tickets, which they take back out and give to ticketless friends. By the time things get under way you have 5,000 people in a 3,000-seat hall. But that's not all. For the Gagarin lecture, after it was apparent that the proceedings were underway, the crowd rushed the door. Looking back down the center aisle I could see guys climbing over the Komsomol ushers who tried to block the door. The invaders advanced partly under their own power and partly boosted from the rear. Finally the guards fell back and the crowd poured in to fill all of the aisles and window sills.

Changing the subject a bit, I recently came across *TIME's* account of a speech in which Nixon expressed his take on the intense desire for peace among the Russian people.²² He was convinced that the Russian people would never support Khrushchev in a war. I'd say he's one hundred eighty degrees out of phase with reality on that point. It's true they desperately want peace, but if Khrushchev were to say, "The capitalists have finally panicked. They're attacking and we must go to war" his constituents would have no doubt that it was true. They've been expecting an attack by 'World Capitalism' for

²² The Russian word for 'peace' is 'mir'. 'Mir' also means 'world'. So each time Khrushchev said, "The Soviet Union wants peace," he was also saying "The Soviet Union wants the world!"

forty four years. They are primed to resist by whatever means and at whatever cost. Their attitude is that, at admittedly unbelievable cost and suffering, they destroyed the armies of Napoleon and Hitler; and if the necessity is thrust upon them, they will do it again.

The clock on Red Square just struck twelve midnight and they're playing the Internationale on Radio Moscow. That means it's Thanksgiving Day. At noon the American students will join the US Ambassador for turkey and pumpkin pie.

With best wishes,

Doug

**Arrival of David Lindsley from UCLA
Mystery of the Disappearing Spoons
Comparing *Izvestia* with *TIME*
Third World Student Attitudes**

23 November 1961

Moscow

Dear Folks,

Yesterday Dave Lindsley, a young physiology PhD from UCLA, showed up to work in the basic neurophysiology lab. It will be interesting having another American around. I hope maybe we can work up trips together to see labs in other cities. I was encouraged the other day when my advisor asked, "When are you planning to go to Tbilisi?" It looks like he's behind the trip; so we made it tentative for early April.

* * *

Dave Lindsley brought the first single-neuron recording apparatus to Moscow. He, Sokolov and colleagues applied it to the study of neural mechanisms of visual attention in the rabbit. His wife, Betsy, accompanied him. He was sponsored by a scientist exchange program between the US National Institutes of Health and the Soviet Ministry of Health. By the end of the year we did, indeed, interview more than 250 researchers in a hundred neurophysiology and psychology labs at twenty-five research institutions in Moscow, Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Kiev and Leningrad. We wrote short abstracts

of their projects in a report, *Observations on Soviet Neurophysiology 1961-1962*, which was edited by Theodore Bullock and distributed to US neuroscientists through UCLA's Department of Zoology. Such distribution was possible in those days when neuroscientists numbered in the few hundreds. It would not be feasible now when meetings of the Society for Neuroscience draw more than 30,000.

* * *

I've started analyzing data from the experiments done so far. It looks as though worthwhile results will be forthcoming. Also, my dog Rex, from whom I removed the auditory cortex three weeks ago, is in great shape. Signals from all of the electrodes are recording okay. The work in the lab is a big reason for being here, so when things are going well there it's not hard to view the rest of the world in rosy colors.

Tonight a woman in an apron came to the door to ask if I had any of the cafeteria's spoons. Answer: "Nyet." It struck me as curious. Picture yourself sitting in a small room somewhere high in Rockefeller Center. There's a knock on the door. It is a girl from Nedick's restaurant rounding up plastic spoons that the clientele has walked off with.

It's interesting to watch events in the US from this perch several thousand miles away. I mentioned how glad I was to get that first issue of *TIME*. Since then I've returned to a more nearly normal state of mind. I can read *TIME* in about three minutes, and all I notice are the most interesting-to-me articles. In terms of news-to-propaganda ratio, I would say that *TIME* is about on a par with the Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, a newspaper that is more interesting and less propagandistic than *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party.

In October I read an article in *Izvestia* about the way the

Program of the 22nd Party Congress was received by Americans. One of the reporters, with more imagination than facts, wrote of how workers on assembly lines all across the US were pausing at lunch, reading the Program together, and marveling at the bold plans the USSR intends to fulfill in the coming twenty years. He described how college students stood outside the New York hotel of the Soviet UN delegation eagerly asking for more news about the proceedings of the 22nd Congress. His report ended with a quote, supposedly from the lips of a New York coed, "Out of Moscow comes light!" When I read this article I thought to myself, "Only in the USSR..."

...Until three weeks later I picked up a copy of *TIME* magazine reporting the response in Moscow to Stalin's disappearance from the mausoleum where, up to then, his embalmed body had lain in a case alongside that of Lenin. The article was written as though the reporter were describing a conversation overheard on Red Square between an inquiring young Russian and a dull old Bolshevik. The young Russian asked all of the questions a *TIME* reporter would think up and the answers were the inadequate ones he would hope to get.

Reality check: one of the American students in our group who went to the mausoleum that day said there were numerous Russians standing around a single guard at the entrance. Members of the crowd asked in innocent tones, over and over, "Why is the mausoleum closed today?" Each time the guard answered equally innocently, "It is closed for repairs." This was the day that *Pravda* carried a banner headline and detailed article to the effect that Stalin was now a heaplet of ashes.

* * *

In later years I read that Stalin's body was not cremated. During the night of October 31, a week before Revolution Day, a grave was dug in the wide grass strip at the foot of the Kremlin wall behind the mausoleum where lesser dignitaries are buried. By the morning of November 1 the Body had been removed from its case in the mausoleum and buried some yards away.

* * *

Contrary to the *TIME* report, all of the students I talked with were pretty conservative on the topic of Stalin's demotion. They went to great lengths to explain why it was necessary to do this thing and to express their conviction and relief that the last remnants of what's known as Stalin's Personality Cult were eliminated. Perhaps the *TIME* article wasn't fake; but it certainly didn't give a balanced view of Russians' reactions to the event. It, like the article in *Izvestia* would be more fittingly classified as propaganda than news.

The same comment goes for anything *TIME* has to say about religion in the USSR. If their correspondent hears a church bell ring he writes as though half the Soviet population were waiting for John the Baptist to come lead them down to the Volga. It's true that one of the first things many people want to know is whether I believe in God. But it's not the question of believers seeking out fellow believers. Rather it reflects the kind of curiosity a Christian expresses in asking a Muslim friend whether he believes a pilgrimage to Mecca is essential to his faith. I know a few people who take the question of belief seriously, but for the majority of students, at least, religion is a curious relic of a past era. I haven't met any Russian who

professes to be religious.

I've started getting the *New York Times International Edition*. It comes in from Paris five or six days late but provides a welcome balance to the 'truth' we get over Radio Moscow. Actually, I seldom listen to radio news or read a Soviet newspaper. It's heartening to see in the NYT things like Kennedy's speech in Seattle or Stevenson's disarmament speech at the UN... also to see programs in the works to address problems that the Soviets think are bound to sink us. They aren't aware that the US government sees unemployment as a problem and not simply as an embarrassment to be ignored and, if possible, denied.

As I may have mentioned earlier, I didn't get to attend the November 7 Revolution Day parade in Red Square. I watched it on TV. It was interesting to note that the people who came into the TV room twenty minutes before the parade began, who took front row chairs and stayed to the end, were Chinese and Vietnamese students. They were all eyes and ears, appearing to take much more interest than the Russian students.

Last Sunday Phillip Lee from Stanford and Urie Bronfenbrenner, a Cornell sociologist, dropped by on their way to tour public health facilities in the provinces, distribution

patterns of mental disease, and general social phenomena.^{23,24} It was good to see a Stanford face. They had just been here three days and the doctor was still in the process of adapting to the idea that “perhaps some aspects of Socialism can work.” I hope they'll stop by on their way out. I want to see what his impressions will be then.

Love,
Doug

²³ More accurately, Dr. Phillip R. Lee was from the Palo Alto Clinic near Stanford. A graduate of Stanford School of Medicine, Dr. Lee became Assistant Secretary for Health and Scientific Affairs under President Johnson; and, in 1993, was Assistant Secretary for Health under President Clinton.

²⁴ Urie Bronfenbrenner was born in Moscow in 1917, six months before the Bolshevik Revolution. His parents moved to the US when he was six. Regarded as a leading scholar in developmental psychology and child rearing he is considered a co-founder of the national Head Start Program, which was established during the Johnson administration four years later.

**Year-end Letter to Many Friends
Summary of Soviet Surprises
Student Interests and Attitudes
First and Second Impressions of Soviet Lifestyle**

Late December 1961
Moscow

Dear Friend,

One good thing you can say about the Soviet Union: it is one place where there's no danger of Christmas becoming commercialized... in fact there's little danger of Christmas period.

When I first arrived in Moscow for a year of studying neurophysiology, new impressions came thick and fast. They were largely in line with the 'fish-will-be-the-last-to-discover-water' principle. I have become aware of unquestioned assumptions that I'd never before known existed. For instance, before I left the good ol' US Aquarium...

--- 'International Airport' meant a sprawling runway system with a sparkling modern building of check-in counters, schedule boards, insurance machines, shops and passengers walking about in their Sunday finest: San Francisco International or Logan or Idlewild. On September 6, I added an "except for" to that conception. For, as it turns out, Moscow International is a two story yellow building, strikingly similar in size and external appearance to the Stanford Anatomy lab.

--- Settling in at the University I became aware that American keys turn clockwise to lock and counterclockwise to unlock; Soviet locks turn anyway they please. Further, there's no natural law that hot water comes out when you turn the left handle, cold if you turn the right.

--- The first Saturday night I discovered that there is a natural law that university students will play Elvis and Little Richard full blast out dormitory windows whether they are in a Stanford fraternity house or on the fifteenth floor of a Soviet university.

--- Before my visit to the Tretyakovskaya Gallery, an art museum was a place where one views great pictures by famous artists. One of the rooms there, however, exhibits scores of the most macabre kinds of political cartoon. Imagine a room at the Metropolitan Museum of Art set aside for a permanent display of macabre politically slanted Charles Addams cartoons without the humor.

--- Legalized gambling, I always assumed, flowered only in the decadent American West... that is until I came across tables in the Moscow Metro Stations that sell tickets for the State Lottery. They display wall ads that show a fourteen-year-old sitting astride a hulking red motorcycle. The caption reads, "For only fifteen kopecks you too can win your own machine!!"²⁵

--- The day we celebrated the Revolution I became aware that I've always associated neon murals and flashing lights with restaurants, bars, and used car dealers. But for Revolution Day the Central Telephone and Telegraph Ministry was lit up like something out of Times Square or Las Vegas... except for the absence of lounging beauties and cocktail glasses. Huge red, green and yellow bulldozers moved across the wall while white hot steel appeared to pour from ten-ton ladles. Instead of "Coke, the Pause that Refreshes!" ads read "Communism, that's Youth!" I had to revise my conception of neon facades as

²⁵ This would no longer come as a surprise now that state-run lotteries are common in the US.

a sign of free enterprise to a more general concept, a sign of somebody out to sell something nobody needs but can be convinced to buy anyway.

--- Finally, a peculiarly American assumption came to light the day I visited the zoo. There's no logical reason why it's not okay, but it seemed strange to see regal eagles housed with the scavenger buzzards.

At first I was hesitant to make generalizations about what I saw, but as time passes I've come to distinguish events that occur only occasionally from events that occur over and over again. My general impression of things Soviet vis-a-vis things American has taken a couple of swings to opposite extremes. During the first month or six weeks my feeling was, "Here's a people that's really on the move and nothing's stopping them!" Here is a university that eight years ago occupied a few buildings downtown near the Kremlin. Now it's a thirty-two story sky scraper on the south edge of the city with four blocks of Physics, Chemistry, and Biology departments surrounding it; 9000 students live in, 13,000 commute by subway and bus. A surrounding ten to fifteen square miles, which ten years ago was woodland and meadow, is now packed solid with five-story apartment buildings and stores. They line spacious boulevards that radiate almost straight from the Kremlin. Look in any direction from high in the University and beyond the new buildings you see the long necks of cranes creating more structures by lifting whole, ready-made concrete rooms into place.

People are proud to see things go up, not just because it means they'll have bigger apartments soon, but because the new construction gives solid evidence that Communism is on the way. All the students I've talked to at any length, even those

who know full well that the information about the West they have is incomplete and distorted, have expressed the opinion that this is the most productive, most creative, most just system going. They are told their generation is the wave of the future and they believe it.

I was immediately surprised by the number of Asian and African students. The foreign students are generally impressive. They receive two or three times greater scholarships than Russian students; they dress better and get around more. To the extent that the Soviet student is a privileged person, these representatives of foreign countries are the privileged of the privileged. The halls are lined with official photographic displays honoring the various groups. When the Berlin wall issue was at its height there were displays showing 'peaceful prosperity' in the (East) German Democratic Republic. More recently the same kind of propaganda is directed at the Vietnamese contingent.

I was pleased by the speed with which I was integrated into the Department of Higher Nervous Activity and put to work within three days after arrival. I was impressed by the way people applied themselves in the lab. As far as I've seen the Russians don't yet have a word equivalent to our 'coffee break', much less a differentiation between morning and afternoon coffee breaks. Occasionally everyone shows up with things to eat and you find yourself in the midst of a spontaneous feast of tea, candies, cakes, cookies, breads, jams, and fruit that has no counterpart in any US lab I've experienced. One evening the women in the Comparative Physiology Laboratory finished up an all-day frog experiment by breaking out a bottle of Hungarian wine, which they served with pastry and fried frogs' legs to all those brave enough to partake.



A celebration was called one day to express appreciation to the animals who participated in the research. Alla Sheremetevo, second to the right of the guest of honor, was their main caretaker.

Once I got my feet on the ground with respect to the language, and was beginning to know a few people beyond the superficial ain't-life-a-dream stage, I found myself in a shift of attitude that was not fast but was extreme. I just couldn't see how these people ever get anything done. Every impression I had of expanded productivity based on state-generated whoops of prosperity was outweighed by the times I was tripped up trying to do simple things and by the number of people I saw pursuing pointless jobs. People put up with great inconveniences in everyday life that would take far less than a full-blown Capitalist revolution or free elections to remedy... just minimal common sense on the part of the guys that make the rules. I couldn't see why they don't question just a little further the infallibility of the big boys down at city hall.

If you need to find where something is sold you run up against one of the worst aspects of the system. I spent at least four full afternoons looking for a simple 220-110 volt step-down transformer for my tape recorder. In the States I could have picked one up in fifteen minutes at any radio-TV sales or repair shop. Needless to say, there's no such thing as Yellow Pages in this city of eight to twelve million souls. Even allowing for the fact that I was hopeless when it came to asking and understanding directions, it was an impossible task. I tried more than half a dozen electric appliance, lab supply, and 'radio-goods' stores in all parts of the city before I found one that ordinarily carries transformers. Of course they didn't have one in stock and had no idea when one might come in.

The most detailed map of Moscow I've been able to find shows no streets other than bus routes. In place of phone books and street guides they rely on a system of information booths located at major subway stations and bus stops. At an information booth you lay down two kopecks (about two cents) and theoretically find out how to get anywhere in the city. The problem is that one often finds oneself needing information when one is nowhere near an information booth. So one finds oneself putting off for days what one should be able to do in two minutes simply by flipping through a phone book.

Sometimes I get the idea that the USSR must have a ministry-level agency devoted to the development of make-work programs. They may not have unemployment here, but they've got a heck a lot of people on payroll doing, practically speaking, nothing. If they'd take the number of women they have freezing in phone information booths and put them to work writing telephone books and drawing maps they'd come out ahead. Shoeshine men sit in their cold little booths along

Gorky Street all day long, when it's obvious that a person on the street wearing anything less than skis or snow shoes is out of his mind. Three bundled elderly women can be found selling books on an empty square, while a few blocks away people are standing four deep around a table where the seller can't keep books on the table they're going so fast. Hordes of little old women appear in the morning to sweep every street and sidewalk using bundles of birch twigs. If somebody would give half of them effective brooms the others could start taking in laundry, and I wouldn't have to send my shirts to the official cleaners where they are stripped of buttons, washed in sulfuric acid and returned more or less pressed two weeks late.

I assume that someday they'll learn that it generally pays to let the guy who feels the need for a service seek out someone willing to perform it directly without both having to get clearance from a tremendous anti-exploitation-of-man-by-man apparatus. Now they have too many people selling what nobody wants while things in great demand are not to be had.

It appears that production is fastest for processes they've done long enough to systematize. In four weeks they installed a block-long six lane underpass in front of the American Embassy; and apartment buildings sprout like mushrooms. The rewards go to those who get done what they're told to do, even if it's not useful. There's no such expression as, "This will either make me or break me." If you try something new and it flops, it will, indeed, break you. If it comes out right your reward is not likely to be increased income but rather a higher production quota. This isn't altogether true. You may get a one-time bonus and your name may be read over Radio Moscow. It's just that, in general, I think people find it easier and safer to get ahead by plugging the old inefficient-but-dependable grind

than by taking a risk that might achieve greater efficiency.

The bywords are 'Produce', 'Fulfill the Plan', never mind the product. The results are walls painted so that the woodwork and windows are half covered, sinks that plug up once a week, all kinds of ledges and grooved paneling that have to be cleaned by hand, balconies that fall off apartment buildings, doors that fall off passing trucks, sidewalks that crack within months after being laid in subfreezing temperatures. As a worker you sign a plan to get something done and you do. If subsequently it turns out the job was sloppy, that is someone else's worry. Witness the overwhelming number of ads for repairmen in every issue of *Trud*, the workers' daily. The most common sign you'll see after 'Glory to the Communist Party of the USSR!' is '*Na Remont*' (Under Repair).

The Plan system carries over into university work. Shortly after I arrived the lab staff were required to prepare their plans for 1962. They were to describe the research they expect to carry out, the findings they will obtain, and the practical implications of their results. The academics know it's a joke. The planners don't realize, or don't acknowledge, that neurophysiologists generally don't know exactly even six months ahead the outcome of their experiments. If they knew, there would be no sense in performing them. Further, in basic research one generally doesn't know the practical implications of anything they've done in the past five years, much less the utility value of their future work.

Some of my most frustrating experiences involve attempts to contact people in other institutions. No one has a schedule. For three weeks another student and I have been trying to reach a researcher who is to sponsor the project of a US student who will arrive a couple of months from now. The

sequence of events went something like this: I called the sponsor's institute a dozen times in the course of three days and always got either a busy signal or no answer. Finally a person answered and informed me that our man had moved to another institute. They gave me a number, which I called for a couple of days. When a person answered, it turned out to be a wrong number. I obtained the correct number and address from an information booth and eventually reached the second institute. The person who answered there said our man was in a lab that only had an inside phone. He rang the phone but got no answer and suggested I call back. I called some ten times more during the next two days, futilely. Finally the other student took off a morning and went personally to the institute. It turned out that our man was not there either. This was one branch of a larger institute. Our man is supposedly in another branch. All my friend could get was the phone number of the foreign office of the parent institute. Over a couple of days he called several times, each time getting a secretary who thought we'd better talk to the boss. The boss seldom comes in and no one knows when to expect him. My friend decided to try another tactic. He got a list of institutes from our Embassy and found the name, number, and address of one located in the region mentioned by the man at institute #2. We decided to go there together last Monday. That turned out to be a minus twenty degrees Celsius (zero degrees Fahrenheit) day, so we thought we'd call first. The woman who answered said, "Oh you must want the Institute. It's not in this building anymore." No she didn't know the number of the new building. It was bitter cold and windy, so we, like Napoleon, punted.

One's first impression might be that this kind of wild goose chase just befalls people unfamiliar with the system, but

that's not true. I've seen people in our department try for days to run down a colleague who knows something about something of interest to them. It's grueling. The Russian word for 'patience' comes from the verb 'to suffer or endure'. Truly, 'tis apt!

One of my more interesting pastimes here is exploring Russian concepts of the US. It's not true that no one here thinks for himself. I had a student last week give me his personal theory as to why "the US doesn't want disarmament." It goes like this: Kennedy is the President. His father is a big business man; therefore Kennedy has big business at heart; therefore the government protects big business; from whom? From the workers, of course. Conclusion: if the government didn't have all those rockets and atomic bombs the American workers would rise up and seize industry. He may have gotten his separate facts from the Soviet press, but as far as I know he didn't get the theory there. I believe that he in fact thinks for himself.

The most serious problems of the Capitalist countries, as far as students I've talked with are concerned, are based on the conflict between 'monopoly dominated' governments and the unemployed. They have no knowledge of the extent to which antitrust legislation has curbed the worst excesses of monopolistic practice, and they take as axiomatic that big business runs the governments of Capitalist countries. The ambiguous roles played by Western governments vis-a-vis the UN Katanga operation have furnished their most recent confirmation of this conception.

* * *

The roles of the Western governments were clarified some years

later. Katanga was a major province of the Congo that seceded within days after the country obtained its independence from colonialist Belgium in 1960. The prime minister of the new Congolese government was Patrice Lumumba, a provocative 34-year old leader of the revolution. Belgium supported the secession of Katanga. Lumumba appealed to the UN to support the Congo's new government retaking Katanga. The UN declined, and he turned to the Soviet Union. A few years earlier Khrushchev had proclaimed a policy of support for 'just wars of national liberation', so the Soviets sent planes and weaponry to the new government. Within days the UN interrupted the Soviet supply route by closing the airport. The Congolese president dismissed Lumumba from office.

According to a US Senate investigation in 1975, the US administration authorized the CIA to assassinate Lumumba. That effort did not succeed before he was captured and sent to Katanga, the break-away province. There, in January 1961, he was tortured and executed by Katangan police with the acquiescence of Belgian officers. In 2002 the Belgian government apologized to the Congolese people for its role in events leading up to Lumumba's death.

At the time of Lumumba's death the Soviets had just completed a new university for students from former colonial nations. The university, located in the same region as Moscow State University, became the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University. Fifty years later it has grown to equal prominence with the State Universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Renamed Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, it continues to serve primarily foreign students.

* * *

I am not as naïve about the pressures moneyed interests bring to bear on parliamentary process as I was in eighth grade. But the Marxist-Leninist principle of inevitability of repeated wars between Capitalist countries for markets, it appears to me, is outdated. One thing they overlook is the effect of the Communist threat on relations within the so-called Capitalist Camp. You hear almost nothing here about the European Common Market and our administration's attempt to put the United States on an equal footing with it. This is a phase in the evolution of Capitalism, which, as far as I know, Marx and

Lenin failed to predict. It appears to be a follow-on to Imperialism, which they expected to be the last phase of Capitalism before world revolution. The evolving efforts among Capitalist nations to make business, not war, may make divide-and-conquer tactics against the rich Western nations more difficult for the Communist bloc.

The interface where, I think, they are more effectively employing divisive tactics is between the rich West and the developing countries. For forty-four years these people have been shouting "We're for Peace, Brotherhood, Friendship, Equality, and Work!" Since the emphasis so far has been on work and liquidation of alleged enemies of the other goals, Soviet accomplishments haven't looked particularly attractive to the governments of developing nations. As life here becomes easier, however... as the dead are forgotten and as successes accumulate, it becomes easier for other countries to emulate the Soviet Union. I was impressed by the enthusiasm and the construction I saw the first month I was here, and I'm just an average student from a relatively rich country. I can imagine the impression of a dignitary from a poorer nation after a two week deluxe tour and public relations spiel. The effectiveness of a tour is no doubt reinforced by the contrast painted between the Soviet Union, which in their view is for freedom of nations on principle, and the 'imperialists', who only allow colonies to achieve freedom in response to force or when they can turn administration over to puppet native leaders who will not harm their business interests. Magazines paint gory pictures of how every small country like Cuba and Somaliland has been sucked dry of its natural resources by firms that carry the profits off to build more monuments to Capitalism on Wall Street.

I should say that the foreign students who come to the

University for several years will not go away with the same impression as bigwigs who get the grand three-day tour. For students from the Middle East, Africa, and India all is not peaches and cream in the Soviet Union. While I'm sure that many who come here good Communists go back home good Communists, there are many others who go home with serious reservations. Apparently large numbers don't finish their full time here; they get fed up and leave. It's hard to tell how much of their dissatisfaction with Moscow is due to the system and how much is just due to being in a strange world where one's major energies have to be channeled to battling snow and to four or five years of intensive study in a difficult foreign language. A discouraging thing, I think, is that those who go home disenchanted may not have as much effect on their government as those who retain the faith. Of those I've talked to, several expressed the fatalistic attitude that, though a totalitarian government is bad, it is more or less inevitable in the poorer, illiterate countries. One Syrian I talked with explained that, while he has no love for Egypt's Nasser, he fears what will become of his country now that it has asserted its independence from the United Arab Republic. Now the pressure will be off the Syrian Communists, and he is afraid the relatively democratic new regime will be unable to hold them off the way Nasser has.

I seem to have strayed from my intention to describe Soviet concepts of US shortcomings. After monopoly controlled politics the biggest problem we have, from their point of view, is unemployment. They picture every third worker as sitting in a bread line while the rest work hand to mouth in constant fear of the inevitable day when they will lose their jobs. They are unaware of unemployment insurance and other measures to

address the economic paradoxes that, according to Marx and Lenin, are to sink the Capitalist ship, e.g., the more productive the society, the less the workers get, because increased productivity is achieved by automation, which puts workers out of jobs.

Well, here it is, the day after Christmas and I haven't got this thing in the mail yet. The rest will have to await another time. Before signing off I want to pass on three of a host of so-called Radio Armenia jokes. The jokes are supposedly based on letters in which simple Armenians (Q) ask for answers from the official voice of Radio Armenia (A).

Q: What is Capitalism?

A: The exploitation of man by man.

Q: What is Communism?

A: Just the opposite.

Q: Is it possible to build Communism in Armenia?

A: Yes, of course, but please do it in Georgia first.

Q: Is it possible to build Communism in the USA?

A: Yes, but why bother?

Doug

PS: In case you want to send a letter:

--- it costs 25 cents by air mail

--- it comes considerably faster if you print the address in Russian as well as English

--- please use interesting stamps if you have them. This place is crawling with philatelists. If they're really interesting,

though, don't bother. The guys in the post office will get them before I do.

Toasts

31 December 1961
Moscow

Dear Folks,

Tonight there will be another party in the department to celebrate a dissertation defense and simultaneously to welcome the New Year. I have to work up an appropriate toast. Last time I was caught off guard. The only thing that saved me was that so many rounds had preceded mine that it made no difference what I said.

Man! It is frosty! Have you ever seen fog roll in when the temperature was five below zero? It is beautiful and it leaves every bare tree branch covered with a thick coat of half-inch long frost spicules.

Love,
Doug

New Year's Parties
The Russian Grippe
Ballet in the Kremlin
Tour and Summer Plans
More on Foreign Student Attitudes

19 January 1962

Moscow

Dear Folks,

Christmas to New Year's was a whirlwind. Dave and Betsy Lindsley and I had a party in their apartment for people from the department. Two days later the British, Swedish, Austrian and US students had a Christmas Eve party. The department had a big party the twenty-eighth. The US Embassy Cultural Affairs Office had an open house the thirtieth for American students and assorted Soviet brass. New Year's Eve there was a grand students' ball and New Year's night the Lindsleys and I had dinner with the head of our department, L.G. Voronin, and his family.

A university students' party is a fairly set, easy to remember, effective routine. Guests assemble in a room, eighty percent of which is filled by tables loaded with wine, champagne, vodka, soft drinks, cheese, sausages, fruit, pastries and the works. Someone is appointed toast master, and the drinking begins. First all males drink hard for about half an hour. Females are allowed, presumably out of respect for their greater good sense, to decline after the first round. All simultaneously start consuming the good food.

After a couple of hours, when all of the guests are toasted out and the table is cleared, everyone gets together to

stack the tables in a corner, and someone plugs in a record player. Dancing follows. Most of the records are Italian, French, German, or American. "Bridge Over The River Kwai" is a favorite, if you can imagine dancing to it. In the end you get regular rock and roll with those who have managed to stretch their drinking through the entire evening doing some pretty funny take-offs on rock and roll and boogie-woogie. (I think that's what I recognized.)



The two weeks around New Years were a time of frequent celebration. Viktor Zakharov (left) was a good friend.

Dancing may finally give way to games, which can be

anything from charades to a kind of combination musical-chairs-spin-the-bottle-strip-poker. Actually it's simpler and more innocuous than it sounds. Those who lose have to contribute part of their attire to a common pile. After the pile has reached suitable height, one person draws articles from it while another (looking in the other direction) prescribes things for the article's owner to do, for example, sing an aria, kiss every man in the room, or go out for another bottle of wine.

I came out of Christmas-New Year's with a pretty heavy case of apathy, which gave way a few days later to a case of real flu. It's called the 'Russian grippe'! The treatment is to go to bed until it passes.²⁶ Everyone comes to look in on you and brings something good to eat. My colleagues in the department attributed my case to going about 'undressed', i.e., without an overcoat, in freezing weather. It's only two blocks from my dorm to the lab, so I find a heavy sweater and wool jacket adequate. And Truth is on my side. According to *Pravda* twenty percent of the, presumably fully overcoated, Moscow population has suffered from it this year.²⁷ I was in bed for a week, and just got up a few days ago. Only during the last couple of days have I begun to feel a resurgence of the normal *joie de vivre*. I feel like there's nothing wrong with me that a

²⁶ My fifty-year memory of this episode is clear as day. I had been lethargic, sleeping round the clock in my dormitory room for a couple of days, when colleagues at the lab sent a doctor to my room. She was a middle-aged motherly figure dressed in white smock and surgical hat. She took a short history, examined my eyes, ears, nose, throat and chest, and informed me that I had the 'grippe'. She gave me a stock of aspirin and assured me that I would survive. As she left she said, "I'm going now. I'll be back to see you in a week, and when I return I expect to see this room cleaned up!"

²⁷ '*Pravda*', the name of the official Soviet Communist Party newspaper, means 'Truth' in any other context.

week of bacon, eggs and orange juice for breakfast, salad and cheeseburger for lunch and fried chicken for supper wouldn't fix.



Standard outfit was wool jacket and tie. The Biology building is in the background. Sokolov's lab was fourth floor on the left.

Last night, I went to the ballet in the new Convention Palace in the Kremlin. The Leningrad Company is in Moscow for a couple of weeks and is putting on three short pieces: Stravinsky's 'Petrouchka', a light tragedy, if that's not a contradiction in terms, about a charmed doll in love with a ballerina doll who falls in love with a sultan doll who kills the charmed doll, Petrouchka. Shostakovich's 'Flowers', a typical

day in the life of a flower seller on Gorky Street.²⁸ Each person who comes to the shop dances with the charmed flowers in the back room and then goes on his way. The roles include students, a little girl, newlyweds, a widow, a soldier-in-love, and two happy old pensioners. Finally, they did Ravel's 'Bolero'. It is said the troupe performed it too lightly, but, being familiar with the music and never having seen the ballet, I enjoyed it. The new Kremlin 'Palace' is the most genuinely modern architecture in Moscow, probably in the whole Soviet Union. The hall seats thousands and is decked out in a fashion reminiscent of the United Nations auditorium, except that the dominant color is a stimulating red rather than a quiet cozy blue.

There's a long article in *Pravda* this morning, which points out that the architecture "...reflects the democratic spirit of a classless society... by a design militantly opposed to the pompous interiors of imperial theaters where an arrogant hierarchy of balconies and boxes carries the imprint of the social inequalities of past social structures." I still can't read this kind of self-righteous politico-economic criticism without being inundated by an internal wave of sarcasm, which in this case I'll share with you. This may be a beautiful monument to the people's democracy, but it still has front rows and back rows, and seats in the front rows cost twice as much as seats in the back rows, approximately ten percent of the minimum monthly income of a Moscow worker. *Pravda* may look down

²⁸ 'Gorky Street' was so named during the Soviet era for Maxim Gorky, a favorite author of the early Bolsheviks. The street was, and remains, the major artery and shopping street that runs north from the Kremlin. After the collapse of the Soviet Union it reverted to its prerevolutionary name, 'Tverskaya Street'.

its democratic nose at imperial theaters, but I haven't noticed a movement to scuttle the beloved Bolshoi, one of the most balcony- and box-ridden theaters in the world. (Of course the main democratic box there is democratically reserved for the highest democratic member of the people's democratic government).

But, ignoring that the new Palace is hypocritically dedicated to The Fight for Peace, Work, Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood, and Happiness of all peoples on Earth, it is a beautiful, apparently acoustically well-designed auditorium.

My experimental work is going more slowly than planned. Since I was sick for a week and one of the animals had a fatal seizure, I'm not as far along as I should be. Also I haven't done as much lab-hopping or reading as I should. Dave Lindsley and I plan to travel in April and May. Early in April we expect to travel south to Tbilisi and Sukhumi, where there's a large monkey colony, and to Kiev. In late May we expect to have two days in Leningrad.

I finally heard from Rolf and Julie who say they probably won't come over this summer. He's to receive his architecture degree and feels it's time he got serious and started some kind of work... maybe even with the Peace Corps.²⁹ According to informal plans Dr. Pribram¹¹ and Jerome Bruner, one my most appreciated professors at Harvard, are supposed to come in this summer. If they are interested in having a homegrown interpreter maybe I'll stick around with them and have time to really do some reading. An advantage of staying here would be that by the end of the academic year I will have accumulated

²⁹ Rolf Goetze was my roommate during our junior and senior years at Harvard. He and wife Julie, indeed, joined the Peace Corps and served in Nepal after graduation.

about 400 rubles (\$440), which I can't take out of the country and which I could easily live on for a couple of months.

I still haven't received the package you sent in early December, which means I can't count on receiving another in the first three months of 1962. That doesn't hurt, however. I've written to Bill Moore and asked for replacement tubes for my tape recorder.³⁰ None has blown out yet, but I play it a lot, and it's running on 10% higher voltage than it's built to take. I'd like to have replacements in case a vacuum tube blows.

I had a long talk with a Ceylonese student the other night. He's a good product of a British-style Catholic private school in Ceylon.³¹ He speaks English well, as do all of the Ceylonese and Indians. He has the fairly common attitude of appreciating the English contributions of educational system and legal system to Ceylon and not appreciating British exploitation of their natural resources. He is in favor of reintroducing the Singhalese language into the schools, especially for the arts and literature, but also for the sciences. He thinks that English should be continued as a required second language. Several such students I have talked to have indicated dissatisfaction that they read and write English better than their native tongues. One, in fact, said that his son isn't going to learn English.

The student I talked to the other night feels that the United States' biggest problem, from the point of view of his countrymen, is the race situation. I was a little unnerved by the

³⁰ Dr. Moore: a pathologist from Stanford who joined the exchange program later in the year.

³¹ Now Sri Lanka.

extent to which he seemed to lump the apartheid problem in South Africa with the American Negro problem. He understands the social versus legal aspect of our situation and appreciates the reasons for our not working a solution overnight; but he points out that the Soviet Union is reaping a bumper crop of good will in the meantime.

* * *

In 1962 the civil rights movement in the US was well underway. It was seven years after Rosa Parks triggered the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama; five years after Martin Luther King assumed leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; two years after the first sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina; and a year after the first 'freedom riders' from northern states began arriving in the South. The most explosive events, however, were yet to come. The riots surrounding James Meredith's admission to the University of Mississippi, Bull Connor's use of fire hoses and police dogs against peaceful black demonstrators in Birmingham, the murder of Medgar Evers, and the 200,000-person March on Washington where King delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech all occurred during the following year.

* * *

He says that the colored students here are a privileged class, that many of the African students find that, even in dating, "the blacker the better." Apparently only a few of the Africans and Asians marry Russians. But, according to him, it's not for lack of opportunity. He wanted to know if I thought dating was a less socially significant phenomenon here than in the United States. I think it is. Certainly there's less emphasis on who's whose. You don't have pinning parties and an announcement in the school paper every time someone gets engaged. Until two years ago, there were not separate dormitories for men, women and couples with kids. Even now men and women are pretty free to come and go in the wings set aside for the opposite sex. In general, the ease of informal contact makes for a less self-conscious dating pattern than you see in the United States.

The Ceylonese student feels that the average Russian student doesn't take his or her dating very seriously. Of course, what isn't serious to the student may become quite serious to the administration. Presumably they had good reasons for separating the sexes' living quarters when they did. As for this student's view of the social position of the colored students here, his picture of the super-popular dance-floor African doesn't altogether jibe with stories of a bumping of heads over racial matters at Kiev last year. Perhaps the more popular the Africans become with Russian girls the less popular they become with the boys. But, in general, this fellow feels that the impressions that colored students take home from the Soviet Union concerning recognition of equality are better than those taken from the United States.

Love,

Doug

Mystery of the Disappearing Stamps Political Economics in Iraq

26 January 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks:

I've received half a dozen letters from which stamps had been forcibly removed...but the letter from Mrs. Rantz came through unscathed.³² There's no apparent rhyme or reason to it.

Had a talk with an Iraqi embryologist the other night. He's a true-believer comrade. He has stories about his government's paying for a cotton mill from England that started okay but was never completed, ostensibly because the ground work was poorly laid. But the real reason was that someone who makes a mint selling ready-made cotton goods to Iraqis got to the contractor, made a deal, and delayed construction into eternity. That sort of story from him I can believe. The kind I don't believe is that the Hungarian uprising was a figment of American propaganda.

Love,
Doug

Russian Student Attitudes

³² Helen Rantz was Head of the Housing Office and wife of the Dean of Stanford Med School. She was an avid stamp collector and I mediated several exchanges of US and Soviet stamps between her and friends at MSU.

Komsomol - the Communist Youth Organization

Late January 1962

Moscow

(Excerpt from a letter to a Stanford friend in Indianapolis)

You ask whether there's an 'audible' sense of driving purpose here. It's audible all right! It's the main reason my radio is seldom on.³³ There's no shortage of publicly declared purposes: 'Build Communism!' 'Overtake America!' 'Guarantee Peace, Brotherhood, Friendship and Work to all Peoples!' I read an article by Shostakovich in *Pravda* recently that ended on the note that the primary purpose of a good artist is to educate people to such goals.

At a more individual level, of course, it depends on the type of person. You take the Komsomols who run the university Agitpunkt (Agitation Desk).³⁴ The Agitpunkt is a volunteer student-run source of materials on Marxism-Leninism, tour arrangements, play tickets, dances and other entertainment for foreign students. They compare favorably with Stanford's 'red hot' element or student council. They perform all of the functions that are handled at Stanford by the Student Council, the Institute of International Relations and the

³³ Every dormitory room was equipped with a radio that hung on the wall above one's desk. It needed no tuning knob, because there was only one station, Radio Moscow. Occasionally it played pleasant classical music or folk songs from the various Soviet republics. More often, however, it didn't; deep-voiced radio journalists excited by the completion of a government building or by the latest US failure or outrageous aggression. Fortunately it had a volume control that allowed one to turn it off.

³⁴ The Komsomol was the Communist Youth organization, to which virtually all university students belonged. Only about four percent of the general population, perhaps more from the university, went on to join the Communist Party, which required far greater political commitment.

Foreign Student House. If you take a more neutral definition of 'driving purpose', namely absence of tormenting doubts that the life path you're following is not leading where you should go, or freedom from constant angst about the value of what you are doing, I would say that a sense of purpose is more common here than at Stanford, certainly at the undergraduate level.

Most serious undergraduates enter an American university with little idea of what exactly they want to do in life. They are constantly assured, or threatened in a sense, that their lives are in their own hands, that they can become anything they want, and that they are personally responsible for the effects of their decisions on their future lives.

The emphasis here is different. You enter the university, medical school or research institute straight out of gymnasium (pronounced with a hard 'g'), which is the equivalent of our high school plus a year. Thus, the basic decision of what you are going to do in life has been made by the time you are eighteen or so. The emphasis is not on molding your position in life. Society provides the positions and you mold yourself to fit one. You don't need to worry about whether you can justify your professional trajectory on the grounds of self-fulfillment, income, productivity or social benefit. If the path you take were not satisfactory, the powers that be would not have created it. When you finish your higher education you will be assigned a position somewhere. You competed to get into the University and when you graduate you may compete for one position or another, but the nature of the position you assume will not depend greatly on any decision you may make.

There is public encouragement to become a broadly educated person within the framework of censorship the government defines, to read the newspapers and keep up with

popular scientific journals, but the educational system is not designed to produce what our universities refer to as the 'well-rounded student'. All students, regardless of discipline, have to take certain courses, such as political economy. But the courses are not so much education in the sense of learning to weigh competing ideas and to deal rationally with ambiguity. Indoctrination in Marxism-Leninism and related topics is more similar to memorization of a religious catechism than to education in the Western sense. It's in college that the serious US student starts thinking that he's got to get things straightened out, got to start concentrating on something! Students in the Soviet system have already made that choice by the time they enter the university. They are specialized from the day they arrive.

In short, I think that serious Russian students feel less aimless, because: 1) the default mode is that the system will determine one's life course; 2) the practical or moral justification for one's choice is not one's responsibility; one's responsibility is to do the job assigned; 3) one is not exposed to a wealth of opportunities at the age when a young person is most concerned about where his education is leading him. The decision was made when he was seventeen and eager to dedicate himself to medicine, or physics, or building Communism.

Your question of whether there is a 'sense of fitting in' in the USSR, like the previous question, is hard to answer given my rather superficial personal interaction with students here. If you were to ask me whether other-directedness, in the Lonely

Crowd sense, exists here I would say, "No."³⁵ The middle class is not sufficiently prosperous and the range of incomes too narrow to support a 'Keep up with the Ivanov's' mentality. Little support exists for a tradition-directed type either. The Party has exerted every pressure conceivable to eliminate traditional rules based on religion for directing one's behavior. The attempt to generate a tradition based on Marxist-Leninist materialism has failed so far, because it is incompatible with human nature. I'd say the predominant cultural type in this Socialist purgatory between reality and the heaven of Communism, is inner-directed. The individual who cannot trust tradition or others to provide effective rules to live by must rely on his own instincts to survive with self-respect.

With best wishes,

Doug

³⁵ *The Lonely Crowd* was the name of a 1950 analysis of the dominant cultural type of middle class individuals in America. The authors, David Riesman et al., postulated that our cultural type had passed through three phases: tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed. The tradition-directed type adhered to rules of social behavior established in the distant past and had difficulty adapting to the rapid evolution of mores during the industrial revolution. Inner-directed individuals trusted their own instincts for right and wrong more than established norms. Socially they sought respect and esteem more than love from others and they built the middle class. Other-directed individuals came to dominate as the middle class became sufficiently prosperous for individuals to afford defining themselves by the way others lived. Other-directed individuals were willing to accommodate the transgressions of themselves and others to maintain their approval. The approval of others was more important than adherence to traditional principles or gaining respect for achievement.

Learning Russian from *Pravda*

7 February 1962

Moscow

Dear Folks:

I'm finally getting to where I can read *Pravda* at the same speed I read the *New York Times*, which means I can keep up with both without making a project of it. It's especially fun to quote Khrushchev from time to time. He recently told some not-too-efficient *Kolkhozniki* (collective farm workers) that they wouldn't last two days in a Capitalist system.

You have to be a little careful, however, about the descriptive language you take from *Pravda*. If you spouted freely some of the adjectives they use to describe various 'enemies of the people', you'd have your mouth washed out by the nearest Soviet mother.

Love,

Doug

Post Office Follies
Nights at the Sputnik and Moon Cafes
Translation Job

20 February 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks,

I'm trying an experiment but I gave my dog a little too much anesthetic and nothing will wake him. Good opportunity to bring you up to date.

The Christmas package finally came last week. I got a note from the post office saying they had something for me from 'England'. So Thursday afternoon I hurried from the lab to pick it up. When I arrived at the window the girl said, "You don't get it here. The package office is downstairs." When I reached the service window downstairs the girl looked at my notice and asked, "Where's the slip from the dean of your department?" "I'll bring it tomorrow," says I. So Friday I went to the Assistant Dean in the School of Biology. He wrote out a little green slip and pointed me to the departmental office. A woman there stamped the slip and I hurried off for my package. When I reached the post office and handed in my note and slip the girl asked, "Where's your passport?" "In my room," says I. "You have to show it." says she. "Can't you accept my student pass?" No, she had to see the passport. So I asked her to hang onto the note and the slip while I ran to get the passport. I knew it was almost time for her to close and promised to be back in five minutes. She said she would be closed in five minutes. The sign on the door said the place was open until seven. It was ten till seven. I said I would run and return before she closed. She said she was going to close anyway. And she did. So Saturday

morning I got my package. You must arrange to send another, if only so I can prove my newly keen facility at playing Russian post office.

There haven't been many surprises in the food department recently, but one did turn up a couple of weeks ago. In case you're interested, a 'milk cocktail' is really a milk shake. Usually I have mine at the Sputnik or the Moon, the nearest cafés on Leninskii Prospect (Lenin Avenue). They even had dance music at the Sputnik last Sunday night, and lots of kids were dancing. Most of the records were Russian, French, Italian, and German pop tunes. Somehow 'See You Later Alligator' slipped in as the American contribution.

Must finish translating the table of contents for an issue of *Proceedings of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the RSFSR*.^{36,37} Among the articles are "Toward a Definition of the Term 'People's Pedagogy'" and "Leisure Time and the Attainment of Culture." Other titles sound more relevant to real life, for instance, "Experimental Analysis of Pupils' Mastery of Concepts in Physics" and "The Role of Auditory Feedback in

³⁶ Professor Luria was editor of the journal and asked me to translate the table of contents for issues that came out during my stay. It paid a few rubles and was good experience.

³⁷ RSFSR stood for 'Rossiiskaia Sovietskaja Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika' (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic), the actual name of Russia the country. That is as opposed to the Soviet Union, which contained fourteen other republics, by their count, eleven others by Western count. Included by both were such countries as Moldavia, Ukraine, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, etc. The three Baltic States, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which were first occupied by the Soviets during World War II, were declared Soviet Republics by the USSR, but the major Western powers never recognized them as such.

the Perception of Rhythm." Of course it depends on your conception of what's real life.

A Rich Uncle for Visual Systems Research

The following was composed recently to describe an experience I remember clearly but was not comfortable communicating by letter at the time. It would be dated about February, 1962.

* * *

Recently I visited a physicist-turned-neuroscientist at the new Institute of Biophysics in Moscow. I got a hint that he was an unusual person when I was required to wait a few minutes in his lab while he finished his yoga exercises. He turned out to be a short muscular thirty-some year-old man with a Yul Brynner haircut.³⁸ He described research in which he and his colleagues were developing computer models to simulate the neuroanatomy and functions of the visual system and the cerebellum. We were unable to finish our discussion before I had to leave, so I asked if I could return the next week to continue. He agreed and we set a time.

I returned the next week. We had chatted for a short while when two other visitors showed up. I offered to leave, but my host said that would not be necessary. I might be interested in what they had come to discuss. So I stayed.

The visitors, in tailored black suits, were the most business-like Russians that I had encountered. I sat quietly to the side as they explained the purpose of their visit. They were interested in information about recent advances in computer

³⁸ Yul Brynner was a famous Russian-born (1920) American movie actor whose trademark was his totally shaven hair style. He was known in Russia as hero of *The Magnificent Seven*, a Hollywood film in which seven gunfighters of the Old West liberate a Mexican village that is regularly pillaged by a huge gang of Mexican bandits. The movie, made in 1960, was a hit when it was shown at MSU.

simulation of human visual processing. They wanted to know the potential for an automated system to analyze photographic images. As the discussion progressed my host asked more and more questions as to precisely what the men had in mind. Finally they described a very specific interest. They asked whether it was technically feasible for a computer to examine a photograph of a geographic area taken from high in the sky and match an object there, say a building or a bridge, with a side view of the same object in a ground-based photograph. My host answered in best academic spirit that, of course anything is potentially feasible with sufficient funding. One of the men responded something like, "Let's say we have a rich uncle who is prepared to pay whatever necessary to achieve what he has in mind."

A little small talk followed, and they agreed to get together again. The visitors left and, without any mention of what had just occurred, my host and I wound up the discussion of his research.

Love,

Doug

* * *

A couple of years after my return to Stanford I received in the mail an issue of Nauka i Zhizn (Science and Life), a Soviet journal of popular science. It came from my host at the Institute of Biophysics. There was no note, but a slip of paper with a page number. The article occupied about a quarter of the page. It described a 'shameful' secret military research program in the US designed to identify objects on the ground that correspond to objects identified in photographs taken from a high-flying 'spy plane'.

* * *

Report on US Student Tour of Yaroslavl

13 March 1962

Moscow

Steve Viederman³⁹

Inter-University Committee

Box 70

Ballantine Hall

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Dear Steve,

Hello from your new *starosta*.⁴⁰ Most of our group took part in a trip to Yaroslavl and Rostov.⁴¹ A Friendship Committee met us the night we arrived and they all remained with us through the whole visit. That gave us more flexibility than on previous trips where we had only one guide and were required to stay together the whole time. For the tour of Yaroslavl we were divided into three groups, which made a manageable number for each guide. The hotel in Yaroslavl was comfortable, the waitress gracious, and the food excellent. If I exaggerate a little it reflects my elation at getting out of Moscow

³⁹Steve Viederman was head of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), the US component of the US-Soviet cultural exchange program, which sponsored the studies of, as I remember, twenty-plus graduate students at Moscow State University and a somewhat smaller number at Leningrad State University.

⁴⁰'*Starosta*' is a Slavic term for leader. The US graduate student group had a rotating leadership the main purpose of which was to maintain communication with the IUCTG at Indiana University. I happened to be *starosta* during the month of the Yaroslavl tour. This was my report on the tour.

⁴¹Rostov Veliky, an ancient city north of Moscow, as opposed to Rostov on the Don, which is more familiar in the West to readers of Mikhail Sholokhov's novel *Quiet Flows the Don*.

for awhile.

Saturday afternoon Dr. Moore, Dave Lindsley and I were able to visit the pathology department of the big medical institute in Yaroslavl.⁴² In the evening some of us explored the city while others visited the homes of individuals they had met during the day. Sunday morning we left for Rostov. Nazarov, the head of the university Foreign Office who accompanied us on the tour, arranged with the bus driver to stop at the home of Nekrasov, the famed Russian poet, which was most appreciated by the history and literature specialists.

A misunderstanding arose in Rostov, where several of the group thought that they didn't get a chance to see as much as they wanted. This was partially because the schedule had not been made clear the day before. When people learned in the morning that we had to leave at 4:00 p.m. instead of at dark (the bus driver had to reach Moscow by 8:00 p.m.) a number decided that they would prefer to skip lunch to see more churches. Others were for going to lunch. The schedule of course called for lunch, and the dispute took place en route. The restaurant was too far from the center of town to permit those who wanted to look at churches to walk back. The bus driver couldn't take them back because he himself had to eat.

The whole situation was aggravated by the fact that, during the earlier tour, we had spread out more than our hosts regarded as appropriate. At the end of the morning tour of the big *kremlin* one of the guides had told us that in her experience

⁴² Bill Moore, MD, the pathologist from Stanford, and I were the only members of the exchange in a scientific area. Most others were graduate students in Russian history, political science, literature, art and language. Bill's research project was a study of causes of mortality observed in Moscow morgues.

even school kids behave more orderly than we.⁴³ After that Nazarov was not inclined to let us far off leash. In the end we lunched together and got back to Moscow about eight in the evening. When all was said and done the majority felt that this was one of our more successful tours. We expect to apply for at least one more group trip. Hope it goes as well.

Sincerely,

Douglas Bowden

Oh yes, you can put me down as having delivered another lecture. This morning I gave a report to a *kafedra* seminar on the topic "The Molecular Basis of Memory".⁴⁴

* * *

Over the years many people have asked whether I felt that I was being watched or followed during my year in Moscow. Actually, I never did. On a couple of occasions I discovered after the fact that I had unwittingly traveled far outside the twenty-five-mile radius of the security zone to which we students, and presumably all citizens of 'Capitalist Countries', were restricted. If my movements had been under constant surveillance I would certainly have been picked up then.

While I never had the feeling that I was under physical surveillance, I assumed that my letters to and from home were subject to being read en route. Indeed, some of the envelopes that had been sealed by licking came through having been opened and sloppily reglued.

My suite-mate, Vadim, who lived in the adjacent cubicle and with whom I shared toilet and lavatory, was I'm sure charged with some form of

⁴³ A '*kremlin*' is a walled town, which in many cities, such as Moscow, has over centuries come to be surrounded by a much larger urban area.

⁴⁴ '*Kafedra*', literally 'chair', means department. Here it referred to the Department of Higher Nervous Activity where the laboratories of E.N. Sokolov were located. '*Higher nervous activity*' is Russian for Pavlovian psychophysiology.

responsibility for me. Our paths seldom crossed, but once a month he knocked and came in to discuss how things were going. He was a congenial blond blue-eyed muscular athletic young man. a somewhat shorter version of the heroic submarine shipman in the movie *The Russians are Coming, the Russians are Coming*. He seemed genuinely interested in whether my life and work were progressing satisfactorily. He never asked my opinions of other students, whether American, Russian or otherwise. His role seemed similar to that of an upperclassman at a US university assigned to mentor incoming students as they become oriented to the institution.

We students assumed that our dormitory rooms might be bugged and so were careful not to discuss topics that we would not be comfortable whispering into the ear of our local KGB officer. We were certain that the room of the elected leader of our group was bugged. We met in his room periodically to discuss problems of mutual interest. Many concerned difficulties in gaining access to archival materials that students in the humanities needed for their research. We found early on that if we discussed such issues slowly, loudly and distinctly in our leader's room, some of the most long-standing, arbitrary blocks miraculously disappeared a day or two later. After a few such episodes the vertical surface behind the leader's couch came to be known as the Wailing Wall. Instead of kvetching to each other in private, we learned to speak directly to the Wall.

* * *

More on the Yaroslavl Tour Soviet and US Space Programs

17 March 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks,

The big event of the past two weeks was an excursion last weekend to a couple of the oldest cities in Russia, Yaroslavl and Rostov about 150 miles north of Moscow. Since the entire American tribe went, the atmosphere was rather touristy; but it was the first time I had been out of Moscow and it was refreshing. Everyone agreed that this was the best excursion that the group has had. (I didn't go on the others... to Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy's estate and to Vladimir and Suzdal, ancient cities notable for their churches.)

We left Moscow late Friday afternoon and arrived in Yaroslavl at about 8:30 p.m. We were met by a Komsomol Friendship Committee made up of students from the various institutes there. Someone had given them word that there were doctors in our group, so several of the Komsomol committee were from the medical institute. They were a little disappointed to find that the only 'doctors' were Dr. Moore and I, a medical student, but it worked out okay. They waited an hour and a half while we had dinner. Then about ten p.m. they accompanied some of us for a late stroll about town, past churches, institutes, and a garden park, down to the Volga.

It seemed easier to talk frankly with our hosts in Yaroslavl than with many people in Moscow. I don't know exactly why. Maybe during the last six months I've developed more of feel for what you can talk about and in what terms without touching the button that produces a clam-up. Maybe

it's that these folks have had less contact with foreigners and foreign news, have less knowledge of living conditions in the West, and thus are less self-consciousness about their own situation. Don't take that hypothesis too seriously, however, because at least two of the group had been to London for ten days as tourists, and all of them I'm sure can get Voice of America or BBC if they want. Most likely it's that their relationship to us was official and not clouded by vague doubts as to whether it's bad to be found talking to an American... the kind of self-consciousness that might arise in a chance meeting. A contributing factor may be that they are people who are successful, who are confident they can get what they want and deserve from life by supporting the system. They make no bones about the defects, but they have learned to live with them and are confident that things are being done to eliminate the defects. Or maybe it's just that I talked mainly with medical students, and medical students tend to be optimists wherever they are.

We visited the anatomy labs of a medical institute. I was impressed by the quality of the teaching materials. The institute is only six or seven years old, three hundred students in a class. The pathology specimens and microscopes are set up in a well-lighted room with potted plants on all sides. The students have prepared the specimens and histology teaching slides themselves. They have a projector that produces the image of a slide on an eighteen-inch square ground glass screen, so that the instructor can point out specific features. The microscopes are of better quality than those provided to us at Stanford. (Although starting this year every Stanford medical student is expected to purchase his own microscope, meaning the quality will, at a price, increase.) As far as I know, we have no such

room at Stanford where one can enter at one's leisure and examine hundreds of pathology specimens in a glass case with indirect lighting. The positive impression was all the stronger considering that this institute is far from Moscow where you expect to see the best the country has to offer.

An enthusiastic series of articles in the *New York Times* gives the impression that the space race has caught on in the US. That's good, even if only to give Americans some feeling for the type of enthusiasm Russians feel for what their country does. The types of comment made about John Glenn's character are exactly the same as those you read here about Yuri Gagarin... modest, courageous, genuine product of the Midwest, or Siberia as is the case here. The statements that the two make are similar in tone: "It's not me, but the whole staff that sent me into orbit and the whole country that stands behind me." There are differences of course. In the speech I heard by Gagarin he sings more the tune, "Be good, do your morning exercises, don't smoke, and work hard and you too may become a space-man". And he took more pot shots at the American space effort than I've heard out of Glenn regarding the Soviet team. (Of course I haven't actually heard Glenn speak.) On the other hand in the reporting on Glenn you get references to a religious faith that Gagarin wouldn't be found dead uttering. Also, I haven't heard anyone on either side address the possibility that sooner or later someone is going to die in one of those capsules. It will be interesting to see who gets to the moon first, won't it?

Love, Doug

* * *

Purely by coincidence my wife Vivian and I were stranded by a cancelled flight at Moscow's Vnukovo airport the night of July 20, 1969

when Neil Armstrong became the first person to set foot on the moon. It was late evening and scores of fellow travelers were stretched out on benches and on the floor watching the event on TV screens that hung from every wall. The level of awe and exultation couldn't have been greater in any US living room

* * *

Unexpected Author as People's Artist

21 March 1962

Moscow

Dear Folks,

Last night I was with a friend listening to a short story read on Radio Moscow. The scene was supposed to be a small, politically corrupt town in the American Southwest. An election for mayor was under way. Most of the action involved side-kicks of the less qualified candidate blocking sincere voters from reaching the voting booth, while others carried drunks from the saloon to cast ballots for the incompetent one. It was amusing, if a little far-fetched, and somewhere toward the end I made a crack that I'd be interested to know who the People's Artist was that invented it. The show ended and the author was announced. It was John Steinbeck. My friend laughed more than was really necessary.

Love,

Doug

International Women's Day

23 March 1962

Moscow

Dear Mom,

A belated Happy International Women's Day! We Congratulate You 'Hero Mother'. (That's English for the caption on the other side of this Mothers' Day card.) I don't know if we can wangle you a medal. For that you would have to produce at least six little Soviet Persons. But yours was no small job, producing three little American Boys. In a short twenty-five years you have two in orbit and a third burning up the launch pad. Keep up the good work!

Love,

Doug

* * *

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8. The holiday originated in Western Europe 100 years ago this year (1911-2011). The focus was on women's rights to work, vote, hold public office, share equal access to education and protection from discrimination of all kinds. In Russia it evolved into a celebration of men's appreciation of women. It is like our Mothers' Day, except that appreciation is extended to grandmothers, daughters, sisters, wives, sweethearts and women coworkers. It is like our Valentine's Day, except that the appreciation of men for the women in their lives is not confused by expectation of reciprocal expression.

* * *

Student Journalism Questionnaire
VW Order for Wolfsburg Pick-up
Photographers from *USSR* Magazine
***Playboy* for Komsomol Acquaintance**

1 April 1962
Moscow

Dear folks,

Here is part of a questionnaire that a student group in the Department of Journalism asked me to fill out. They have an English bulletin board newspaper to which they are asking various English-speaking foreign students to contribute.

Q: What books by Soviet authors and poets are available in the US?

A: At bookstores in New York and San Francisco one can order any book currently sold in the USSR. The majority there are, of course, in Russian. Authors whose works have been translated into English and are available in any large city include Lenin, Gorky, Ilf and Petrov, and Mayakovsky. Among more recent authors whose works have been translated are Sholokhov, Erenburg, Simonov and others.

Q: How do students in the US spend their free time?

A: They work in student organizations, such as the university newspaper, drama societies, choirs, sports teams, hospital volunteers, etc. They work to earn money for their education and night life. They go to dances, movies and football games. Depending on the part of the country they may go skiing or

swimming or play tennis. I think that the way students distribute their time among various activities and the types of students who take part in various activities are much the same as at MSU.

Q: What can you say about the Russian character?

A: What can you say about the Russian character?

Q: What type of work awaits you on your return to the US?

A: I shall continue as a third year student at Stanford School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California.

Q: What is your major ambition in life?

A: To answer this question.

Q: What surprised you most about the life of people in the USSR when you first arrived?

A: The number of people it is possible to squeeze into a single bus!

It's time to start ordering a Volkswagen. Would you be willing to go to our local dealer and ask him:

- 1- For a catalog or brochure that shows this year's colors. Seeing the colors is very important, because Dave Lindsley wants to buy a VW too, and he needs to be sure he gets one the color of his wife's eyes. Oh mercy!
- 2- Whether it is cheaper to write an order directly to the factory or to have the US dealer order it for pick-up at the factory. (The dealer in Palo Alto told me the price is the same. The

cut he gets if I order through him is taken by the factory if I order there directly... just want to check that.)

- 3- How far ahead does one have to order? What down payment is required, and when.
- 4- Ask if these figures, which I have from last summer are still correct:

Regular Sedan	\$1165
American equipment (required)	\$44
Public liability insurance	\$8
International registration	\$3
Sun roof	\$63
Gas gauge	\$25
Tire chains	\$8

- 5- What are the rules on Duty, e.g., how many miles or days does it have to be driven in Europe to qualify as a "used car"?
- 6- Does it cost more to ship if you travel from Europe to the US by plane than if you travel by ship yourself, i.e., is there such a thing as 'shipping it on your ticket'.

Whether I buy it in late June or in late August depends on whether I decide to go out and drive it back to Moscow for the summer. That would be reasonable only if having several thousand miles on the speedometer makes a difference on the import duty. So the question about the duties is important.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The outcomes and answers were: 1) VW didn't offer a model the color of Betsy's eyes, so they bought green. 2) The price was the same whether ordered from the US or from Moscow. 3) Payment was in full on pick-up at the factory. 4) The prices had not changed appreciably. 5) The car became "used" as it was driven off the lot. 6) There was no advantage to travelling by ship.

I've received the final okay for travel to Tbilisi, Sukhumi, and Kiev; leaving with Dave and Betsy a week from today. We'll be on the road April 4-17.



The photo in *Amerika* magazine: Left to right: Olga S. Vinogradova, E.N. Sokolov, D.F. Lindsley

A couple of reporters from *USSR* magazine were hanging around the lab today. The magazine, which is sold by the Soviet government in the US, corresponds to the *Amerika* magazine, which the US Embassy distributes here. They wanted pictures of happy American students working at MSU. They got Dave but didn't get me. They say they want to photograph us at the

hockey rink Thursday.⁴⁶

Spring is coming. I can walk on the street bareheaded and overcoatless without having motherly friends warn me that I'm going to die of pneumonia.

Some updates:

--- Everything was as expected in the Christmas package and I received the *Family of Man* photographic exhibition book.

--- Got the *Playboy* calendar, but since I found out that a Komsomolets can be black-balled for life if something like that is found in his possession, I've had second thoughts about passing it on.

--- Received my income tax form finally - happy day!

Love,

Doug

⁴⁶ Didn't happen.

**Tbilisi – Capital of Soviet Georgia
Georgian Hospitality
One Georgian’s View of Stalin**

4 April 1962
Tbilisi, Georgia

Dear Folks,

Dave, Betsy, and I are now in Tbilisi. Tbilisi turns out to be a great change from Moscow. It lies 1500 miles to the south, between the Caspian and the Black Seas almost on the Iranian border. We have a tendency to think of the various Republics of the USSR as pretty much like states in the US, but I would say the difference between Russia and Georgia is more like the difference between the US and Mexico than between, say, Indiana and Louisiana. The quality of life appears better here than in Moscow. In addition to the warm weather we've seen no lines and there seem to be more meats and vegetables in the markets. The people, terrain, and huts built one on top of another up the side of the mountain are just what I would expect to see in Mexico. Dave and Betsy, who've been to Mexico, confirm this.

We were met at the airport this afternoon by representatives of the Georgian Ministry of Health, the Institute of Physiology, and the Medical Institute. After registering us at the Hotel Tbilisi, our hosts left us to our own devices until tomorrow morning when we are to see the Institute of Physiology. We

spent this afternoon wandering around the center of town and ended up in the Intourist Hotel for supper.



Betsy Lindsley's consistently positive outlook and commitment to learn Russian added an extra diplomatic flavor to our travels.

About eight this evening we had just finished a supper of *shashlyk* (Georgian lamb kabob), rice, bouillon and Georgian red wine, when the waiter delivered a bottle of champagne to our table. We said that there must be a mistake. We hadn't ordered champagne, and as far as we knew none of the people who knew we were in town had any way of knowing where we were dining. But the waiter insisted that a friend had ordered it for us. After a few minutes of futile protest on our part the

champagne was opened and a fellow came over to explain that his friend, sitting at a neighboring table, had ordered it for us. Refusing was out of the question; so we asked if we might join them at the donor's table. As it turned out, said donor was already well under the influence. Nevertheless he ordered another bottle of champagne and two orders of broiled chicken, which we toasted and enjoyed to the last drop and wing, respectively.

Our friend's first toast was to Georgia, with a fairly long preamble regarding Tbilisi; how it got its name (hot water), and the fact that Christianity was introduced here before it was heard of in Greece or Rome. I think an argument was expected on this point, but I was in no position to argue. It's possible, since I know that Tbilisi was founded in the fourth century B.C., and that Christianity didn't get started much before zero B.C. We learned that Georgia was persecuted for ages by the Persians, Turks, and Iranians and so finally "joined" the Russian empire... and that it is recognized by all as the most hospitable nation in the world. "Be he friend or be he enemy, when a man is in our home we honor him... even though when he is beyond the border he may be our bitterest enemy." This we heard several times before Betsy finally interrupted, "I hope this doesn't mean you consider us your enemy." "Not at all," he said, "It's just our Principle. We have things of which we may be justly proud, and we honor our guests." After awhile, I began to wonder whether this was a toast or a history lesson. But he hadn't forgotten where we were in the protocol, and in the end we drank.

* * *

According to Wikipedia-2011 our host was not far off regarding the origin and early history of Georgia. 'Tbilisi' comes from an old Georgian

word 'tpili' meaning 'warm', and the area is known for its many sulfuric hot springs. The name 'Georgia' derives from St. George of dragon-slayer legend. According to Eastern tradition the historical George was born in Syria Palaestina the son of a noble Christian military family. He became a favored soldier of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ultimately had him executed for steadfastly and publically refusing to renounce his belief in Jesus Christ. He was tortured and martyred by decapitation in 303 in the last of the Roman attempts to stamp out Christianity.

According to Georgian tradition, Christianity was brought to Georgia, then known as 'Iberia', by a young woman relative of George, St. Nino of Cappadocia. Through a combination of proselytizing and healing Nino converted the royal family to her faith and in 326 Christianity was declared the state religion of the future Georgia. St. George became the Patron Saint of the country. He is said, even today, to be as profoundly revered as Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. Emperor Constantine made Christianity the favored religion of Rome in 324, but it did not become officially the state religion until 380.

The (Roman) Catholic Encyclopedia, which traces the history of the same St. George as patron saint of England, does not recognize the historical validity of this or any other detailed account. It confirms only that St. George was a real person who lived and suffered in Palaestina at a time consistent with the Diocletian story.

* * *

Another interesting discussion had to do with Stalin. Joseph Stalin, born Iosif Dzugashvili, was a Georgian. In the lobby of our Hotel Tbilisi there is still a twice life-size statue of the old boy. Our friend's attitude toward Stalin is as ambivalent as can possibly be. Deep down he "honors" Stalin, as a Georgian who "shook the world, and won the Second World War." If you want evidence for this, he says, read Churchill's memoirs. This honor is voiced in spite of acknowledgement that "Stalin never did anything for Georgia." If it hadn't been

for him, Socialism would never have developed, and they would have Capitalism here as in America. This fellow considers America the "standard against which we measure ourselves." Khrushchev is a "decadent" who, like Stalin before him, has the Soviet Union by the throat. He is demolishing Stalin's statues, but what can the Georgians do? There are only one and a half million of them, and if they voiced the least objection, the Russians could grind them out in a minute. The Russians don't do this, however, because the Georgians are an intelligent people and contribute greatly to Soviet science and prestige. For instance, a Georgian chemist has recently made discoveries that render Mendeleev's table of the chemical elements obsolete. "The Russians don't report this" he says, "but it's true."

Ultimately we drank to Stalin as a monster who shook the world and to Washington, Lincoln, and Kennedy to even the record. A couple of other claims that left me questioning this fellow's trustworthiness were: 1) his brother shot down Gary Powers; and 2) while he's an electrical engineer, he has danced with the Georgian Folk Dance troupe in every Soviet Republic... plus Sweden, Denmark, and New York. Regarding Powers, the story is this. Our host's brother and other Soviet fighter pilots were trailing Power's U-2 plane. Ground control told them to drop back and fired a rocket. One Russian pilot didn't drop back quickly enough and the rocket demolished

him instead of Powers. Then, our host's brother pulled up and shot down Powers. So there you have it.

* * *

The undisputed facts of the U-2 incident are that on 1 May 1960 Gary Powers, a 31-year old former US Air Force pilot, was flying a high altitude spy plane for the CIA over central Russia. His plane was hit by something that made it crash. The plane was a Lockheed U-2 built in Burbank, California and launched out of Pakistan. Official Soviet and, after some obfuscation, US government sources agreed that the weapon that brought it down was a newly developed Soviet S-75 surface to air missile. Powers parachuted and was captured, tried and sentenced to ten years in prison. Less than two years later he was released in a spy swap and went to work as a test pilot for Lockheed.

Many reports on other aspects of the incident remain contradictory. Pertinent to the story we heard in Tbilisi is the following passage from Wikipedia-2011 (no source given). "Powers' U-2 plane had been hit by the first S-75 missile fired. A total of three had been launched; one missile hit a MiG-19 jet fighter [that was] sent to intercept the U-2, but was unable to reach a high enough altitude... Another Soviet aircraft also attempted to intercept Powers' U-2... [It] was directed to ram the U-2. The pilot attempted but missed because of the large difference in speed." So, perhaps our host's brother was involved in the Gary Powers incident. And if that's true perhaps our host did dance in Sweden, Denmark and New York. We'll never know.

* * *

During the time that all this was being related, a pair of men in black suits took a seat at the neighboring table. Our friend's sidekick several times tried to quiet him with, "Why do you go into all this?" "Quiet down!" I couldn't tell whether our neighbors were listening, but they were quite attentive when finally we pulled out. All in all an interesting evening.

Love,

Doug

**The Russian Primate Center in Sukhumi
Interesting Georgian Personalities
National Identity under Soviet Communism
Observations on Religion in Tbilisi**

Second Week of April 1962

Tbilisi, Georgia and Sukhumi, Abkhazia

Dear Folks:

Sukhumi is a small Black Sea resort town and the capital of Abkhazia, an 'Autonomous Republic' within the Republic of Georgia. It is similar in climate and vegetation to northern California. There Dave and I visited the biggest baboon colony in the Soviet Union. We entered a hill-side compound half the size of a football field and enclosed by twelve to fifteen-foot high walls. The head veterinarian accompanied us and passed out enough candy to keep forty or fifty baboons distracted while we looked around their living quarters. Just before we were to step out I made the mistake of looking directly into the eyes of one of the older ladies. She must have thought I was being fresh, because she advanced and made a face, as though

she might lunge for my Adam's apple. Fortunately, the vet stepped in and offered her a sugar lump to leave me alone.

If you include baboons, rhesus monkeys, squirrel monkeys, and other species they produce 100-150 monkeys a year, all of which are used in research here. Topics of research range from infectious diseases to experimental neurosis. The latter can apparently be produced in an alpha male just by putting him in a separate cage within the compound occupied by his harem and a vigorous younger male to keep them company. Alpha forgets every conditioned reflex he ever knew. And if he remains in that situation too long he may develop hypertension and cardiac problems.

* * *

The Russian primate center was, indeed, the largest and oldest continuously operating primate research center in the world. It became the model for the national primate research program established in the US during the 1960s. In 1957, Paul Dudley White, cardiologist and President Eisenhower's personal physician, and James Watt, Director of the newly established US National Heart Institute, visited the center at Sukhumi. Participants in a US-USSR exchange of health experts, they were impressed by the cardiovascular research conducted there. Of particular interest were the studies of hypertension and other cardiovascular disorders induced by social stress in baboons. They recommended to the President that the US build a primate center for cardiovascular research. Congress responded by appropriating funds to establish seven multidisciplinary Regional (now National) Primate Research Centers, each with up to two thousand or more animals, in California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

* * *

We've run into several interesting individuals on this trip. One was Professor Beritashvili, or Beritov, as he's known in Russian; a short, bearded, energetic, seventy or eighty year-

old physiologist, founder and head of the Institute of Physiology in Tbilisi. He studied at the University of Leningrad in the early 1930s and has trained several generations of Georgian neurophysiologists.

In Sukhumi, before breakfast one morning, I met another elderly gentleman carrying a branch from a flowering lilac bush. He offered to lead me to a coffee-serving café but wanted first to stop at an office to drop off the flowers to a friend. It turned out that he was an architect and she was director of the town planning and construction office. She had recently lost her husband, and the fellow knew that she would be pleased with this sign of spring and interest. In the end, he bought me coffee, plus a cup for a girl who happened to sit down at the same table.

Another character was the fellow who runs the Intourist office in our hotel in Sukhumi. He is a short, mustached Georgian who talks like a combination Intourist Guide book and UN memorandum. He knows to the last nose how many Georgians, Abkhazians, Russians, Greeks, Turks, and Tartars live in Sukhumi. He knows fifteen ways Sukhumi may have gotten its name. He knows that Adlai Stevenson has five advisors and that California has Nixon. He knows how tall Napoleon was to the centimeter, that Stalin was a little taller, that Mr. Khrushchev is as big around as he is tall and very nervous. The latter characteristic is allegedly a result of the rough life he led as a coalminer in the Ukraine before he got into politics.

Again, comparing Georgia to Moscow, the pace seems slower here. There are fewer people per square foot of sidewalk and in six days we've still seen only one line for meat. There is not as much construction in progress, perhaps because the

population pressures are not as great as in Moscow. More people seem to be out on the streets, probably because it is comfortably warm here. The number of peppy little Pioneers⁴⁷ here is about the same, i.e., they are everywhere. The red scarves and white shirts are the same. Only the faces are different. Here they are brown with coal black hair and big black eyes, whereas in Moscow they are blond and blue-eyed.

Amazing to me is the extent to which the people in Georgia are bilingual. The Georgian language apparently is as different from Russian as Russian is from English, yet everyone from truck driver to neurophysiologist speaks fluent Russian. You would have thought that by this time either it would have become apparent who needs to know Russian and who doesn't or that Russian would have supplanted Georgian among academic people, who often even teach in Russian. But no, even they speak mostly Georgian among themselves. All the signs on stores and in various restaurants and shops in Tbilisi are printed both in Georgian and in Russian. In Sukhumi they are printed in three languages: Abkhazian with a Latin alphabet, Georgian with a uniquely Georgian alphabet and Russian with the Cyrillic alphabet. To accommodate all three the sign above a narrow store can extend several feet on both sides of the storefront. Book stores carry an equal number of works in Georgian and Russian. I'm not sure of the age at which kids start studying Russian, but it's early. The fourth-grade scrawls on the walls, "Sasha loves Natasha" etc. are as likely to be in Russian as in Georgian. Students at the medical institute have

⁴⁷ The Pioneers were the Soviet equivalent of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.

a choice of whether to take their training in Russian or Georgian; apparently they split about fifty-fifty.

Judging from the architecture, the scenery and the complexion of the people, as well as the language, it's not difficult to see why the Russians, the Georgians and the UN, for that matter, think of Georgia as a separate nation, or Republic as it's called. I can imagine that the differences in other Republics are equally striking. You get some feeling for how even educated dispassionate Russians justify to themselves the fight for international Communism. Our argument that the Soviet Union is out to 'liberate' everyone by forcing them into a common mold they see as exaggerated. They might say, "Look at Georgia. The people have acquired a less exploitative social structure without losing anything essential. If Communism can work in Georgia as well as it does in Russia, it will surely work in Cuba. After all, the scenery, architecture and complexions are about the same as before, and the languages haven't been altered. The native population maintains its distinctive national characteristics." Of course we include in national characteristics such things as religion, political system, and economic system, so we look at the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and say to ourselves, "What a monolithic Communist society, they're all the same!" But the Soviet citizen looking from inside looks at Georgians, for instance, and sees vast differences. If such differences persist after incorporation into the Soviet Union, the Georgians couldn't have been deprived of too much." (That's how I think the Russians may see it, but I wouldn't swear to it.)

In Moscow there's an old church that has been painted a horrible chartreuse, strung with colored lights, and dubbed the Avant Garde Movie Theater. The churches we see in Tbilisi are

definitely in better shape than most of those in Moscow or Yaroslavl. But in Tbilisi we've seen two apparently active churches. True, all of the worshipers were women past forty, some with small children, but the buildings are in relatively good repair.

As in Moscow, however, the amount of anti-religious literature in book stores and at magazine stands is substantial. Betsy and Dave were taken aback by the number of anti-religious books and pamphlets directed at the Pioneer age group. Such titles as *Religious Superstition: a Threat to Communism* or *Science vs. Religion* repeat one theme over and over, that the young Pioneer is shirking his responsibility if he does not do his best to help stamp out the superstitious beliefs of those poor duped adults who put their faith and energy into worshiping a nonexistent god rather than into work that will materially improve their situation.

I haven't attended a whole service, but from what we have seen, it's not hard to understand why young people might lose interest in the religion of their grandmother. The service we saw was altogether ritual. A very old priest wandered among the icons wafting puffs of incense from a long-handled incense burner and chanted, while the little old women standing in front of the altar slowly got down on their knees, bent forward, touched their heads to the cold, hard stone floor, slowly got back to their feet and crossed themselves. In the Russian and Georgian churches there are no benches. Everyone stands, kneels, and crosses himself as the spirit moves him. The lack of anything like a sermon that might challenge one's intellect in the face of the barrage of ostensibly logical anti-religious propaganda would make it pretty hard for intellectually serious young people to feel they'd found Truth

there. Again, I should see a whole service and learn what kinds of discussion groups, if any, supplement this kind of service before I can confidently make such a generalization. I'll tell you the truth though...when I first saw that ancient white-bearded priest in all his dark embroidered robes and braided gold belt shuffling around muttering and swinging his incense burner under ancient icons I felt as though I had stepped out of Soviet Georgia into the fifteenth century, or onto a movie set. It's the first time I've ever been in a church and felt so completely out of touch with the worshippers.

It's interesting that, though everyone who shows you around their city is careful to point out that they're not a Believer, the first sights they show are their churches. In Tbilisi several beggars sat at the entrance to one of the churches. You almost never see them in other public places... even less often than in New York, Boston, or Bloomington. I don't know whether they congregate at the churches because begging is legal there, or because people who attend church are more apt than others to give them something.

Love,

Doug

**Rational Talk on Disarmament
Political Economics
US Ambivalence on Social Conscience**

Third Week of April 1962
Kiev, Ukraine

Dear Folks,

Our first night in Kiev I talked to the most rational Russian I've met, at least as far as US-Soviet relations are concerned. He was a middle aged man, director of an institute in Moscow, who had come to Kiev on business. He joined us at a table in the hotel restaurant. Once he knew where we were from, he got right to the point asking, "When will the day come that we can sit down together without the threat of war between our countries?" I can't reconstruct in detail how the conversation went from there, because the topics we covered were wide ranging and the transitions weren't always smooth; but the main points were these:

The necessity for disarmament: He is as conscious as we of the fact that the atomic race is a vicious cycle, and he believes that we can never break out of it until we begin to trust each other. Only if we can find some formula for generating mutual trust can we expect to disarm.

I said that trust is only helpful if it's realistic. Our reasons for not trusting the Communists are both theoretical and empirical. From the theoretical viewpoint, until Khrushchev it was an article of Marxist-Leninist theory that war between the

Capitalist and Communist powers is inevitable. Khrushchev has not renounced the goal of universal Communism, but he has said that it may be possible to achieve it without war. We are in the position of declaring that it's not possible without war. We say, "Over our dead bodies will our kids live under Communism," not because we want to become dead bodies, but to indicate the seriousness of our concern. We know that the aim of the Soviet Union is to establish Communism worldwide and that according to Communist morality, any act that brings 'liberation of the world's working class' nearer is justified. Thus, if the Western world dumped its arms and suddenly found that the Soviet Union still had enough tanks and bombers to liberate the American working class, that would not be considered by Communists to be a violation of their moral code. I said that's at the theoretical level. At the empirical level we have experience with what comes of trusting the Soviet Union in regard to not testing nuclear arms. For two or three years up to last September we had an informal non-controlled agreement to suspend nuclear testing. Then in two months' time, the Soviet Union blew off fifty bombs, almost one a day.

He took exception to the number fifty, insisting it was only twenty-eight, but acknowledged that the principle was important to our discussion and accepted the point. He said that the question of disarmament and peaceful co-existence goes back to 1922 when Lenin, at one of the early international Communist meetings suggested this be the goal of all Communist parties everywhere. He returned to the idea that, though it's hard to trust each other, we've got to figure out some way to do it before some chance occurrence takes control out of the hands of either side. Recently *Pravda* reported articles in the US press telling of a case in which unexplained blips on a radar

screen of our military warning system led the Strategic Air Command to send up bombers with atomic weapons and flight plans directed at the Soviet Union. Fortunately the error was detected in time, but the question is, what would Russian commanders have done if they had seen fleets of American B-52's approaching from all sides? It's too dangerous a game.

I said that our government feels it can't trust the USSR, but that it is looking for a way to disarm that would make trust unnecessary, e.g., by inspections carried out by neutral observers. He said that we can have any kind of control we want... all we have to do is accept Khrushchev's plan for disarmament. I said that kind of statement was a contradiction in terms, because Khrushchev's Plan calls for real inspection only at the fourth stage, two years after both sides have supposedly dumped their atomic weapons. The only inspection guaranteed in the first three stages is observation during dumping. It doesn't allow searches for weapon stores that may not have been declared. I told him that a commission is considering statistical modes of inspection that would be reliable enough to assure the US, but not so widespread as to scare the USSR.

* * *

On a recent trip to Moscow I was interested to see how Russian historians of the post-Soviet era deal with the arms race and other important events of the Khrushchev years. With fifty years' hindsight and twenty years of 'glasnost', the openness of governmental activities to public knowledge declared by Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, they should have reached some degree of consensus on what went on in those years. I remembered that during my time at MSU the massive red brick National Historical Museum at the north end of Red Square had devoted several highly propagandistic floor-sized exhibits to the regime's account of Russian history after the

Bolshevik revolution. I was interested to see if that exhibit had given way to a more objective representation.

When I stepped to the window to purchase a ticket the seller asked me if I wanted to attend certain special events for an extra charge. I said, no thanks, that I was primarily interested in the permanent exhibition that included the Khrushchev era. She replied that there was no such exhibit. The historical section now ends with the early 1900s.

According to the museum's website virtually all recent exhibits are devoted to archeological and cultural themes, such as histories of the cinema, the church, 'gold metal of the gods', mosaics, and the works of famous authors, artists, playwrights, and actors. Apparently the historians have yet to arrive at a consensual perspective on political events of the twentieth century.

* * *

But I'm telling more of what I said than what he said. Here are some other impressions and arguments he had to offer. He wanted to know if it were true that in America big business encourages any measure that tends to increase unemployment so as to always have a large pool of eager workers. He expressed disbelief at my belief that it is possible to separate to a significant extent economics and politics... economic power and political power. His concept of a Senator is a man who is director of a large company, who has his workers build tanks all morning and then goes down to the Senate in the afternoon and votes for the government to buy them. He found it hard to believe that we have laws against conflict of interest.

* * *

My view on the interaction of political and economic power has evolved considerably during the fifty years since this was written. I've come to believe that the potential power players in any society vary in 1) intelligence and 2) balance of cooperative vs. competitive traits. In any given interaction of economic significance the more competitive tend to come out

ahead of the more cooperative, who are by nature marginally more willing to compromise their own interests in pursuit of moving forward.

Intelligent competitors learn that an effective strategy is to modify the rules of political engagement to the advantage of themselves, their class or their party. Thus, any political system that remains stable for a few generations comes to be dominated by the most intelligent of the most competitive. That appears to hold whether power accrues to the Machiavellian advisers of kings and oligarchs, or to the sycophantic nomenklatura of the Marxist state, or to the conscientious politicians and judges of trickle-down ideology.

A social system evolves through incremental changes in the rules that govern individuals' ability to acquire and maintain control over societal resources. A. Sinyavsky, a Russian commentator on Soviet culture has written how it happened in the Soviet state: "The division of society into leaders and subordinates began early on, during the first years of Soviet power. Property was divided despite the fact that most Communists had been against this before seizing power. But now it turned out that the Communist leaders were an elite deserving better treatment from the State than simple proletarians."⁴⁸

In 2011 it appears that a democratic nation like our own may be vulnerable to the same process. An increasing number of politicians are elected, judges selected, and referenda passed on the basis of heavily financed disinformation, character assassination and ideological propaganda rather than by informed rational deliberation. Once such officials move into positions of control they enact and interpret legislation written by the most intelligent competitive lobbyists and advisers to provide advantage to the competitive sector, so that money (which, incidentally, is power, not speech) is concentrated more and more in a coalition of the 'best and brightest' of the most competitive members of society. It is my impression that the makers and interpreters of the law are gradually converting our representative democracy into a government, not of the people by the people for the people, but of the cooperative by the ideological for the competitive.

* * *

We exchanged information about pensions, conditions for retirement, and the problems of people who retire with little

⁴⁸ Andre Sinyavsky, *Soviet Civilization: a Cultural History* (New York: Arcade/Little, Brown & Co., 1990).

or nothing to do. It's true that they have more comprehensive social welfare programs than we, i.e., safety nets that in principle protect everyone. We have such a patchwork of programs that, except for Social Security, it's hard to tell whether everyone is covered or not. This is an area of social philosophy in which American attitudes are ambivalent. With trust in trickle-down economics and the natural generosity of our people we have a tendency to say, "Of course that kind of thing isn't a significant problem in the US. We're a rich country... we have churches and charities that take care of people truly in need." We are proud of our self-sufficient spirit when we say, "We don't believe in paying tax money to guarantee food or health facilities to people who should go out and get job. That's Socialism. It weakens the human spirit. If they don't make it it's because they made bad decisions. They need to think ahead." On the other hand, I have met few Americans who comfortably acknowledge that a significant portion of our elderly population, when desperately ill, has no access to medical care, or that significant numbers of kids go to sleep hungry every night.⁴⁹ The Russians see the logical contradiction between these attitudes more readily than we.

Love,

Doug

Popular Reportage on the Nuclear Arms Race Anti-Biological Warfare - Required Course for Biologists

⁴⁹ This was before Medicare and Medicaid (begun in 1965) or food stamps (begun in 1964).

Late April 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks,

If I hear one more self-righteous radio commentator protest 'monstrous American H-bomb tests', I'll write a letter to my Commissar. It's too bad Christmas Island isn't located inside the Kremlin.⁵⁰

I just learned that fourth year students majoring in Biology get six hours a week for a year on defenses against biological warfare. That's almost as many hours as we have for anatomy in medical school. I don't know that we have any course that deals with biological warfare.

Love,

Doug

⁵⁰ Christmas Island, in the Central Pacific south of Hawaii was the site of several atomic bomb tests conducted by the US government in late April, 1962, about the time this was written.

Visitors from Home Summer Plans

Late May 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks:

I've finally finished my experimental work... put the last animal to sleep a week ago. Since then, I've been analyzing data and showing around American visitors. Last week five neurologists were here from the States. Simultaneously, Jerome Bruner, one of my two favorite psychology professors from Harvard and Thomas Gonda, a Stanford psychiatrist and Med School curriculum planner, were here. I had a chance to see psychiatric clinics and psychology institutes that I wouldn't otherwise have managed to visit. Also, that gave me a short workout as interpreter.

My plans for the summer haven't crystallized yet, but I probably will be home sometime in mid-September. I expect to spend at least a month in West Germany, mostly Munich, where there is to be a computer conference in late August.

It's spring now. Apple trees are blooming, the campus lawns are blanketed with dandelions, and it doesn't get dark until 10:00 p.m.

Love,
Doug

Nazarov - Consummate Bureaucrat

Request to US Cultural Exchange Negotiators

Early June 1962

Moscow

Dear Folks,

The longer I am here the more apparent becomes a contrast between the rules that govern this place and home. In the US, unless an action is explicitly forbidden, it's ok. In the USSR, unless it's explicitly approved, it's forbidden. One needs official authorization to do almost anything. A worker from a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) cannot visit a friend in the city overnight without registering with the police. No one can enter the main campus of the University or any of the surrounding buildings of the University without showing a pass that carries all the documentary authority of a passport or driver's license in the US. One cannot enter any public building without presenting identification and a reason for entering.

So, of course when Dave Lindsley and I wanted to travel to Leningrad to visit the University and research institutes we had to obtain authorization from the Foreign Office of Moscow University. The head of the Foreign Office was Nazarov, the person who had met me at the airport when I first arrived in September and who accompanied the US students on university-sponsored tours. He was a person of medium build, handsome and as congenial as a used-car salesman. He gave the impression of efficiency and concern for one's interests as one sat across his desk, but, somehow, after leaving his office one was 'out of sight, out of mind'. I started visiting him about a mid-June trip to Leningrad in late April. David, whose exchange program linked him to a different ministry, started

the same process with his foreign office. He received his permission within a couple of weeks. Despite several visits to Nazarov, mine had still not come in early June.

It happened that about a week before we were to leave for Leningrad representatives of the committee that sponsored the US component of the Student Exchange, the IUCTG, arrived in Moscow to negotiate next year's exchange agreement. Having made zero progress in obtaining authorization for the trip I wrote the enclosed summary of my efforts and asked the committee's assistance.

Request to US Negotiation Team for US-USSR Student Exchange⁵¹

I- Regarding my request to remain in the Soviet Union under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education: I handed the MSU Foreign Office the accompanying request April 28, and have heard nothing about it since that time. I would appreciate it if the Embassy would bring this question up with the Ministry. The reasons and justifications for my wanting to stay are included in the request.

II- Regarding my request for a study-related trip to Leningrad: The following is a short summary of my attempts to arrange to be in Leningrad from June 7-17.

⁵¹ This is the document in which I requested assistance of the US committee to obtain authorization from the MSU foreign office to extend my time at the University into the summer and for travel to visit research institutes in Leningrad.

April 4-17: I made a very satisfactory tour of neurophysiology laboratories in Tbilisi, Sukhumi, and Kiev with David Lindsley who is here under the Ministry of Health Exchange.

April 26: Nazarov called me to his office to make the following charges concerning my trip to the South:

1. Deceiving him into believing that the Ministry of Health had approved my going with Lindsley to visit institutes, which they had only arranged for him to see;
2. Behaving rudely toward officials of Kiev University;
3. Demanding that the Kiev Ministry of Health reimburse me for a plane ticket.

The latter two charges have no basis in fact. The first grew out of my having assumed that if any exchange of letters between the Ministry of Health and the University Foreign Office were necessary, one or the other of them would have mentioned it.

April 28: Nazarov indicated that if I wanted to go to Leningrad with Lindsley, I should get a letter of approval from the Ministry of Health.

May 1 or 2: Lindsley learned from Rozonov at the Ministry of Health that they have nothing against my going with him to visit the institutes and that we could avoid a repetition of earlier misunderstandings on the trip south if they simply received a letter of request from the MSU Foreign Office.

May 3: I handed Nazarov a rough draft of a letter, which I asked him to write to the Ministry of Health. He agreed and told me to come back the following Monday to pick it up.

May 7: Nazarov handed me back the rough draft and accused me of lying when I indicated that he had agreed to write the letter. He said he could write a letter only if he received a letter from the Ministry of Health telling what his letter was to include. He tried to call Rozonov then but could not get through. He promised to call him again, however, and to arrange everything.

May 8 and 9: I called Nazarov a couple of times. He had not been able to reach Rozonov; he had sent no letter.

May 9 or 10: I went with Lindsley to see Rozonov personally. The Ministry of Health was perfectly willing to have me accompany Lindsley on a tour of institutes arranged by them. He agreed to call Nazarov himself to tell him the kind of letter necessary.

May 14: I called Nazarov. He'd neither heard from nor reached Rozonov. He said he would try again, but added that I should take a more active part myself in arranging this trip.

May 15: I handed Nazarov the enclosed copy of a letter which I asked him to sign and which I offered to take to the Ministry of Health myself. He refused to sign the letter, but, supposedly, called Rozonov while I listened. As a result of the call, he said that no letter was necessary from either side. I should come back June 1, give him my *Vid na Zhitel'stvo*⁵², and everything would be arranged. Finally, he asked me to stop calling and coming to see him so often.

May 16: Lindsley called the Ministry of Health. Rozonov said that he had received no call from Nazarov. He had talked with his own chief and received approval of my going, but a letter of request from the MSU Foreign Office was still necessary.

⁵² Documentation of Residence.

May 18: I called Nazarov and told him that the Ministry of Health was still expecting a letter. He agreed to send a letter immediately.

May 21: Nazarov left Moscow to be away for two weeks.

May 25: Rozonov indicated to Lindsley that he had received no letter from Nazarov.

May 26: Nazarov's substitute in the Foreign Office knew nothing of the letter and did not know to whom I should inquire further in his absence. When she tries to call the Ministry of Health no one answers.

June 2: She's still trying to call the Ministry, but no one answers. Maybe they all died of Russian gripe.

...In view of the above, I would appreciate it if the Embassy would contact the Ministry of Higher education making clear the following points:

1. This trip is one of two that were proposed in the study plan and which the Foreign Office accepted from me last September. The other trip was granted without difficulty.
2. To my knowledge, the Ministry of Health is genuinely willing to let me take part in the tour of laboratories, which they have arranged for Lindsley. Indeed, there is an advantage to my going with him in that he does not speak Russian.
3. There is no laboratory included in this tour that has not been open to virtually every group of physiologists that has visited the Soviet Union in the past two or three years.

The day after presentation of my request to the exchange committee I visited the Foreign Office to check on progress. Nazarov said that I should return the next day and his secretary would provide the documents for the trip. I did, and she did.

Love,
Doug

* * *

We never learned the true nature of our 'scandalously rude behavior' in Kiev. When I asked Nazarov, he merely responded to the effect that, "You know well enough. You should be ashamed to come back asking authorization for a trip to Leningrad... you Americans are all alike. Offer you a finger and you take the whole arm up to the elbow!"

My best guess is that his cooperation deficit had something to do with events at the hotel where we stayed in Kiev. We were booked into the fanciest accommodations that the capital city of Ukraine had to offer. A high official of the hotel greeted David and Betsy, assigning them a two or three room deluxe suite for dignitaries on the top floor overlooking the city square. I, as 'interpreter', was assigned a small room on the second floor above the kitchen at the back of the building. Dave and Betsy checked into the suite, but for some reason decided it was not right for them. I doubt that it was the cost, because, while we were paying for the accommodations ourselves, our stipends were generous and the charge was only six rubles, a little over six dollars per night. But for whatever reason Dave called the front desk and requested that he and Betsy be moved to more modest quarters.

The management resisted, saying that the suite had been ordered by Kiev University especially for them, that a big conference had booked all accommodations and that the hotel had no other rooms to offer. David persisted, and he and Betsy may have been moved to a different room. I don't remember, nor does Betsy. But my guess is that this incident triggered bureaucratic outrage toward the Foreign Office of Moscow State University. The rooms had been booked as though for a senior American Professor travelling with wife and personal interpreter. Perhaps the hotel manager had, at some political cost, bumped a ranking dignitary to accommodate said Professor. When 'Professor Lindsley' turned out to be a twenty-some year-

old California postdoc for whom the best suite in Kiev was not good enough, the administrator's indignation would have been extreme.

Later in 1962, after my return to Stanford, I learned from a friend in the following year's program that Nazarov was no longer head of the university Foreign Office. He had moved to the Peace and Friendship Committee of the Academy of Sciences. Soviet institutions involved in international projects, whether with the US or countries in Europe, Africa, Asia or South America, had a Peace and Friendship Committee that was essentially the foreign public relations arm of the institution. In the hierarchy of academia the Academy of Sciences was a more prestigious organization than the Ministry of Higher Education to which the University belonged, so Nazarov's move probably represented professional advancement.

A number of years later, in 1969, I was in Moscow on a three-month library research project administered by the US National Academy of Sciences. As my wife and I entered the expansive, almost empty campus of the Russian Academy a familiar figure approached. It was Nazarov. We shook hands, shared a good natured bear-hug, exchanged a few words about the good old days, and resumed our separate life journeys.

* * *

**Anticipation of Leningrad Trip
Moscow Radio's Dismissive Report of
Stanford's Medical Achievement**

7 June 1962
Moscow

Dear Dad:

In a few hours I leave for a week in Leningrad. Before going, I thought I'd write you to say that I've ordered a VW, which means you can send the dollar equivalent of 5,918.80 DM (~\$1,480) to Mr. VW.

They say this is the best time to see Leningrad. The trees have leaves, and it is the time of White Nights when it doesn't get dark for almost two weeks. I hope it turns out to be worth the six weeks of harping it took me to acquire authorization to go. It's as if after fighting an uphill battle for a couple of months and finally being approved, I suddenly ask myself, "Now, why was it you wanted to go there?" We'll see.

If you find my letters becoming fewer and further between again, it's not because nothing curious and unexpected ever happens, but because I try to keep from being carried away long enough to get some work done. As a for instance, the radio just announced that scientists at Stanford University removed a dog's heart, replaced it within two hours, and the dog is still living a year and a half later.⁵³ This was all reported in a, "Wow! Can it be true?!?!" tone. Then, they invited a Soviet scientist from a local medical institute to discuss it. His comment was that the work may be of some

⁵³ In retrospect I'm sure the broadcast referred to work that was, indeed, preliminary to heart transplantation. Such studies were conducted at Stanford by Norman Shumway, a pioneer in the area.

technical significance should it ever become possible to transplant hearts. As far as being used as a standard surgical procedure, it is useless. It's better to work on the heart where it lies. His Moscow institute has transplanted hearts and the dogs lived (no mention of how long). His final comment was that the "American work is only of theoretical interest and can hardly be said to be of practical importance." If I allow myself to pay attention to things like this, my thoughts run something like: if they don't consider it a piece of worthwhile work, why do they report it to 220 million captive radio listeners? If they just want to spit they should go someplace else; or maybe I should.

Love,

Doug

Highlights of Leningrad Summer Plans

Late June 1962
Moscow

Dear Folks:

Well, I've been to Leningrad, seen the Peter and Paul Fortress (where Lenin's revolution began) and the Hermitage (Leningrad's Louvre). It rained the day I wanted to go to Peterhof (Leningrad's Versailles). I saw both ends of the White Nights, which are really twilight dusks extended to dawns. I'll write more about the business end of the trip later.

Having finished my lab work I'm writing the thesis, trying to finish in time for Sokolov to read it before he goes to his dacha for the summer.¹² Day before yesterday I received permission to stay during July, so I'll get a chance to slow down. I can start translating Luria's book, *Traumatic Aphasia*, and

maybe even get a suntan.⁵⁴ Though, unfortunately, we're having a cold summer to make up for our "warm" winter.

I'll probably get a ticket for Munich that will put me there about the thirtieth of July. I would like to go to Berlin again if the annual crisis doesn't become critical.

Love,

Doug

* * *

The following was composed in the course of this writing. It describes events and enduring impressions from the Leningrad trip that were not recorded at the time. It would be dated June 1962.

* * *

**Pavlov-Soviet Relations
Antireligious Museum
World's Biggest Outdoor Swimming Pool**

Once approved, our trip to Leningrad went off without a hitch. David and I visited laboratories and interviewed scientists in a number of laboratories at Koltushi, Pavlov's summer laboratory complex outside the city; the Tower of Silence, his complex of sound-proof, vibration-proof labs in the city; and the Pavlov Institute of Physiology, also in the city. Pavlov was not a great fan of the Bolsheviks, but Lenin and Stalin were fans of his. The Bolsheviks, for all their suspicion of the intelligentsia, were great supporters of science, and Pavlov's study of brain mechanisms of cognition and behavior

⁵⁴ *Traumatic Aphasia: Its Psychology, Syndromes and Treatment*, Mouton & Co. (1970) was a report on the roles of specific areas of the cerebral cortex in language. It was based on A.R. Luria's study of some 700 patients who sustained brain injuries during World War II. Many neuropsychological tests currently used to assess brain damage are based on techniques developed in the course of those studies.

was the approach to psychological phenomena most compatible with Marxist-Leninist materialist philosophy.

Pavlov's international reputation, which was established well before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, lent an aura of scientific respectability to the Soviet regime. Already in his late sixties during the Revolution, he had received the Nobel Prize in 1904 for his studies on the neural control of gastric secretions. He had turned to the study of conditioned salivation responses to external stimuli, 'psychic secretions', as providing a window onto brain mechanisms of learning and psychopathology. The Soviet government supported his research generously for two decades until his death in 1936.

What was good for Pavlov the living researcher turned out to be not so good for Pavlovian science. After Pavlov's death Stalin declared his findings and theories to be scientific dogma. All Soviet scientists who studied psychiatric, psychological or behavioral phenomena were required to translate their concepts and findings into Pavlovian terminology. Thus, the careful terminology for operationally defined concepts, such as 'unconditional' and 'conditional stimuli', 'voluntary' and 'involuntary reflexes', 'excitatory' and 'inhibitory' neural mechanisms, were cut loose from their operational definitions as other scientists applied the terms metaphorically to all kinds of cognitive and behavioral phenomena without experimental validation. The scientific literature became unintelligible to Western scientists who,

already burdened by the language barrier and suspicion of Soviet censorship, eventually ignored it.

* * *

Even today, fifty years later, only a small minority of Western scientists follow the progress of Russian neurophysiology with more than skeptical curiosity. A major factor contributing to the continued neglect is that, during the past several decades English has become more and more the lingua franca of science. Compared to researchers in other nations with large neuroscientific communities, such as Germany, the Scandinavian countries and Japan, neuroscientists in the Former Soviet Union have been slow to publish in English-language journals. Thus, while the political barrier has faded, the language barrier has grown. The communication gap and the drastically reduced support of scientific research in Russian universities and institutes since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 continue to contribute to Western neglect of Russian achievements in neuroscience, a field in which historically Russia excelled.

* * *

Some outstanding former students of the Pavlovian school, who insisted on pursuing the inquisitive spirit rather than the dogma of the Pavlovian approach, were blocked from professional advancement until after Stalin's death in 1953, almost two decades after their mentor had passed from the scene. Only in the mid-1950s were former students who operated outside the box of Pavlovian dogma able to get back on track professionally. Not until Sputnik did Western scientists regain serious interest in Soviet neuro- and psychophysiology.

Turning to other aspects of our Leningrad experience, the most unusual institution we came across in Leningrad was the Antireligious Museum. It is housed in what was one of the city's most elaborate and revered churches, the Kazan

Cathedral. The museum is the most impressive testament I have seen to the intensity of the Communist Party's will to eliminate religion as a competitor to Marxism-Leninism for the minds and hearts of Soviet citizens.

In Moscow the most obvious signs of religious suppression are in the number of prerevolutionary churches that have been converted into movie theaters or hockey rinks, or simply left to deteriorate. I have been told that many were stripped of their valuables and destroyed to make way for government office and apartment buildings. A few are being renovated, not as places of worship but as historical monuments to prerevolutionary Russian culture.

After the 1917 revolution the Russian Orthodox Church was allowed to exist in drastically curtailed form. Over the decades much of its property and wealth have been confiscated. There are few truly functional sanctuaries and fewer seminaries. I have been told that the Church is forbidden to teach Christian faith to anyone under the age of seventeen. The majority of worshipers in the congregations I have seen have been small numbers of elderly women and smaller numbers of elderly men with a very few bearded depressed-appearing young men at the fringes and one or two silent beggars at the church entrance. The only exception was at a village church some thirty miles southeast of Moscow. I accompanied a friend to a midnight Easter-eve service. The congregation filled the sanctuary. Adults of all ages attended. At the end of the service they followed the priest outside where they chanted and marched around the church. This was a ritual of the prerevolutionary Church that has been banned until very recently. I had the impression that some of the participants

were still apprehensive that authorities might interrupt the procession.

* * *

Another exception: In 1969 my wife and I attended an evening worship service in Tbilisi. We were invited by our host, the director of a neurological research institute. He was not religious but appreciated the Church as an important repository of Georgian culture. The sanctuary was packed. Reverent well-dressed urban adults of both sexes and all ages mixed with individuals of clearly more modest means. To all appearances it was an open practice of vibrant faith. We were told, however, that it was not representative, that the rules against worship outside the church building continued and that the law against religious education of minors remained in force.

To me the greatest surprise of the post-Soviet era, aside from the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself, was the rapidity with which religion returned as an integral institution of Russian life. My 1960's impression was that generations of suppression of religious practices, destruction of places of worship, censorship of writings in support of religious ideas, criminalization of religious instruction for the young, sophisticated antireligious propaganda and other efforts to substitute the Leninist political model for the Christian theological model of man's relation to man and the universe had all but eliminated the religious impulse from the body politic. That impression was wrong.

After 1991, the few churches that survived in any degree seventy years of Soviet neglect and abuse suddenly were renovated. Many church buildings that had been diverted to other purposes were converted back for religious activities. The most striking example of site reconversion is the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow. Built in the 1800s to honor the Savior God, who was credited by Tsar Alexander I for the rescue of Moscow from Napoleon in 1812, it was the tallest Orthodox cathedral in the world. A magnificent symbol of Russian culture, it contained sections dedicated to individual Tsars and was the site of the first performance of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. When Lenin died, in 1924, the Bolsheviks had it demolished to make way for a similarly magnificent, but secular Palace of the Soviets. It was to be a monument to Socialism. The tower would be topped, not by a cross but by a statue of Lenin. The Palace never materialized. In the mid-

1950s Khrushchev had the site dug out to construct the world's largest outdoor swimming pool (see letter of mid-September, 1961).

Within a very few years after the Soviet Union imploded individuals throughout Russia, including many Muscovites, contributed funds toward its restoration. Within a decade Christ the Savior Cathedral had been rebuilt according to the original design. In 2004 its symbolic significance to the Russian people was reconfirmed when the Church selected it as the site where the last Tsar, Nicholas II, and his family were glorified as saints. The Bolsheviks had murdered Tsar Nicholas, his wife and children as part of their effort to render irreversible the establishment of a new cultural order for humankind. They identified and attempted to eliminate religion as opiate of the masses. But they were unable to offer an adequate alternative treatment for the psychological turmoil of responsible citizens living under intolerable inescapable conditions. Their Marxist-Leninist model, given more than seventy years and three generations to prove itself, failed to fulfill a fundamental need of a significant portion of the human species.

* * *

Fourth of July at the Ambassador's Residence Khrushchev and Colleagues Drop By Passport and Registration Follies

5 July 1962

Moscow

The US Ambassador, Llewellyn Thompson, invited US students at the University to celebrate the Fourth of July at Spaso House, the ambassadorial Residence. The day was bright and sunny. We arrived at the formal columned entrance in ones and twos to find well-stocked tables of champagne, wine and hors d'oeuvres. Benny Goodman was in attendance, having completed part of a goodwill exchange tour of Russian cities.⁵⁵

About half an hour later, unexpectedly to most of us, Premier Nikita Khrushchev joined the party. He had come to convey respects and best wishes to the Ambassador on the occasion of US Independence Day. He was accompanied by three or four other Soviet officials, including the new Minister of Defense, Rodion Malinovsky.

After all dignitaries had been suitably introduced, the crowd moved outside to enjoy refreshments in the Residence garden. The Premier was the most gregarious of the group. He chatted with several of the diplomats and students. Then he engaged Goodman in a brief but lively debate over the merits of jazz as an art form. Nikita jocularly, but not gently, said he didn't really dig jazz... he prefers good music. Benny said he

⁵⁵ Benny Goodman was the great jazz clarinetist and swing-era band leader of the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1950s and 1960s he performed as often as a classical artist as a jazz musician. He would have been in his early fifties when he toured the Soviet Union in 1962.

likes good music too. Nikita said, "Then why do you play bad music?" Benny said that some people have to hear a lot of jazz to come to enjoy it. Nikita said good music sounds good the first time you hear it. He said Benny shouldn't take his slighting remarks personally; he doesn't like Russian jazz either. He thinks it's in the same class as abstract art... Then Nikita quoted, ostensibly from President Eisenhower, to the effect that abstract art turns his stomach, with which he, Nikita, agreed. Benny said, in certain cases he might agree too, but you have to let artists try new forms etc. etc. It was about here that a historian friend standing next to me whispered, "A conversation between deaf men."

It was clear that this was to be the last interchange of the day. Khrushchev offered to shake hands with anyone he had missed in the first round. Used to the forceful, even painfully tight, American handshake I was surprised by the gentle press of a small pudgy hand.

Their congratulations bestowed, the Premier and his entourage took leave as quickly as they had arrived.

* * *

*Some years later I came across a description of Khrushchev's Fourth of July visit to the Ambassador's reception in *The Penkovsky Papers* (F. Gibney, ed., New York: Doubleday and Co., 1965). Oleg Penkovsky was reportedly among those who accompanied the Premier on that visit. He is credited by most authors with having been the CIA's source of information about Khrushchev's project to establish missile sites in Cuba, which led to the international crisis confrontation three months later. According to the book, Penkovsky first met Rodney Carlson, an attaché of the US Embassy, at the July Fourth reception and, about a month later, passed the incriminating documents to him. Penkovsky was arrested by the Soviet government on October 22. That was in the midst of the crisis, which was resolved by personal contacts between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev a week later. According to most Western and Soviet sources he*

was executed as a US spy in May of 1963. A very few authors believed that Penkovsky was a double agent whom the KGB used for a year and a half to feed disinformation on Soviet nuclear capabilities to the British and Americans. Their theory was that he actually provided little information the West did not have already, that he was put through a public mock trial as a sham exposé of Western espionage and secretly released back to an inconspicuous position in his own country. As far as I know, no evidence to support the latter scenario has emerged in the twenty years since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

* * *

After the reception I took my daily dose of cheer from the Moscow Passport and Registration Office. I need one more document stamped so that I can stay here through July. I sat in line for two hours that afternoon waiting for a 'round stamp' only to be told that foreigners are handled in the morning from nine to one. So, I took the fifty-minute trolley-subway-bus route home muttering to myself all kinds of bad things about offices that don't post signs telling their hours. This morning I was up bright and early, 7:30 a.m., so as to get there before the two-hour line formed. I sat out front for twenty minutes until a kind passer-by told me that Thursday is the day they're closed. I would make a sign myself and take it to them, but I think they make a lot of good enemies among foreigners this way, and I wouldn't want to hinder progress. Besides, they probably change the schedule from week to week. You can see why I'm so eager to stay on into July.

Love,

Doug

**Russian Attitudes toward the French
Russian Temperament**

Impressions of Family Life

20 July 1962

Moscow

For some months I've been collecting my thoughts on Russian attitudes toward the French. The French are admired here for their revolutionary spirit and culture. You can always get translations of the great French social critics from Voltaire and Balzac to Sartre... at least the work of Sartre that focuses on alienation and the emptiness of life in the modern world. It is assumed, of course, that such emptiness exists only in the Capitalist countries, of which France happens to be one.

Shortly after the war the Communist movement was very strong in France, and as far as anyone here knows, is still on the verge of victory there. Furthermore, French coalminers and electric power unions are constantly striking against the government and demonstrations are prevalent. These indicate to Russians that the French have a 'consciousness of their historic role'. The French are considered more advanced than the peoples of certain other, backward Capitalist countries.

One of the most romantic things a Russian can imagine is for a mass of people to rise and demonstrate over a blatant injustice. It's like for us, more individually oriented folks, when Paladin shoots the gun out of Gulchface's hand just as he is about to shoot a vulnerable cowpoke, or when Perry Mason calls a gas station attendant to the stand to prove that the prosecuting attorney is an idiot.⁵⁶ It's the tingly feeling that the

⁵⁶ Paladin, played by Richard Boone, was the gentleman gun fighter in *Have Gun Will Travel*, a popular western on US television in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Perry Mason was an equally popular TV defense attorney whose shows continue to reruns on cable TV.

good guy is going to win after all. When millions of Parisians lined the streets last spring to protest OAS violence and police reprisals,⁵⁷ they incidentally posed for newsreels that stirred the Russian soul. For a Russian, such demonstrations against lawful government in a Capitalist country symbolize the victory of justice. Of course they don't demonstrate here anymore, because justice achieved victory once and for all several decades ago. But that makes mass demonstrations in other places all the more romantic. The people here look on with deep sympathy whenever the 'people' of France demonstrates its collective will.

The other thing for which they value the French is culture. As you probably know, one of the largest collections of French impressionist paintings in the world is in the Hermitage museum in Leningrad. They have another fairly large collection at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. A big French cultural exhibition was here when I arrived last fall, and the area most jammed was the modern art exhibit. It's not that everyone likes the art any more than everyone in the US, and Khrushchev sees to it that they don't do much of it themselves. But they are open minded and curious. Ever since the government adopted Picasso's dove of peace, modern art has become respectable among the educated class, and it is assumed that the French are frontrunners in that style. A final indication that the Russians consider culture the realm of the French is that, while the signage at the entrances to restrooms

⁵⁷ OAS: The Organisation Armée Secrète, or 'Secret Armed Organization', was a militant nationalist French underground organization that fought to prevent Algeria's transformation from French colony to independent nation.

in airports and big hotels is 'Men' and 'Ladies', in art galleries and opera houses it's 'Messieurs' and 'Dames'.

If I had to compare the Russian temperament with that of other nationalities in the West I would say that it's more similar to the French temperament than any other. (Keep in mind that I've met less than a dozen French individuals in my life.) It's my impression that they don't have the same concept of 'precision' as the Germans, or of 'law and order' as the English, or of 'the deal' as the Americans... or of 'smorgasbord' as the Scandinavians. They seem to want the good things of a technological society without attention to such mundane details as quality control, contract law, or money. There's probably a difference between the Russians and the French in that the latter play down such issues because anything that costs money tastes sweeter free and because they have a great consciousness of individualism and free will. The Russian attitude is different. They abhor money because it's the root of all evil and disregard law and order because in their experience it inevitably involves machinations by the strong to exploit the weak.

Someone asked me the following questions:

Do people seem vigorously healthy? Yes, to age thirty or thirty-five anyway, especially in the University. They go for exercise. Lots of biking, ice skating, and weights (for men).

What sort of diet do they have? Poor, for two reasons. One is that, especially in places other than Moscow, from November to April they can't get fresh vegetables and seldom find fruits or meat any place. The other is that cafeteria lines are so long that, if one has anything else to do, one ends up taking only one or two meals a day. The rest of the time one

eats candy, ice cream, which is extremely good, or whatever else one can pick up on the run.

Are they affected by the vitamin and mineral mania? No, nor by the low calorie mania.

Did I get to know a family? No, but the family seems less of a factor in organizing one's activities here than in the US. For a young adult your social group is your *kollektiv* (work group), your union, or your university department. Husbands and wives commonly take their vacations separately and more often go to movies and plays with members of their 'collectives' than with their mates. That impression may be exaggerated, since most of my experience is with people in the university setting. But it appears extremely difficult for couples who do not work in the same institution to coordinate daily activities. If an unexpected opportunity or obstacle makes a change desirable, a person in the States can call the spouse and invite them to take part, or notify them of a delay. That is prohibitively difficult here. I've described before how impossible it is to communicate by telephone, so people become very tolerant of broken expectations. Vacation schedules are likely to be determined by the institution with which one is associated. And raising a family must be difficult. You don't often see parents on the street with their kids, except tiny ones. The number of kids per family is seldom more than two, and most of the people I've talked too, men especially, but women too, feel that too rigid domestic expectations can keep

a person from getting the most out of life.

Love, Doug

* * *

One might conclude from the foregoing comments that children were underappreciated. That would not be true. While restricted living space and the necessity that both parents work made it difficult to have more than one or two children, my impression was that children were loved, protected and a source of pride to their parents.

In winter the littlest appeared on the snowy streets as a fur ball with a small round face and four short straight appendages snuggled in a stroller or waddling along hand-in-hand with an ancient aunt or grandmother. A baby on a trolley could attract a flock of motherly types who gazed, cooed, tickled and commented, "What a charming, intelligent little creature!" A passer-by not satisfied with the care a child was receiving did not hesitate to reprimand the mom. Some American mothers, Embassy wives with young children dressed in light thermal winter-wear, were taken aback when a Russian grandmother would bend to admire and chitchat with the baby, then straighten up and berate her for not loving the child enough to dress it suitably against the cold.

Many families included a live-in grandmother, aunt or uncle who cared for the youngster. A comprehensive system of nurseries, preschools and kindergartens provided daytime child care. The Pioneers provided extracurricular activities for older kids. Developmental and educational issues were major topics of scientific research. The government bestowed Hero Mother medals on women who had six or more children. In short, the system provided much stronger support for child rearing than for the marital relationship.

* * *

Last Words from Moscow Chinese Circus

25 July 1962

Moscow

Dear Folks,

This will be my last missive from Moscow. Today is Saturday and I leave next Wednesday... don't know the time yet, but I paid 400 rubles (\$440) for the ticket. I'll go by Aeroflot to East Berlin. They say you're rushed through there pretty fast to West Berlin. Then I'll take a deep breath and decide what to do next. I can't pick up the car before the ninth of August, so I may just take a hotel room in Berlin and sit for a week.

One of the best things I've seen recently is the Chinese Circus, which is now in Moscow on tour. It's the first Red Chinese performance I've seen and probably the last for some time. Their acts are like nothing I've ever encountered. The acrobatics are done by eight men in unison, hopping up twenty foot poles upside down and then sliding down... or falling until they are just about to drive their collective head into the floor before braking. They twist plates on the tips of thin sticks eight at a time while turning somersaults and riding bicycles. The most exotic features are the music and costumes. The music is all cymbals and high-pitched atonal instruments, nothing like our brass circus bands; and the costumes, are all flaming pinks, greens, and violets.

Love,

Doug

Into West Berlin - From the East this Time

2 August 1962
c/o American Express
Munich, Germany

Dear folks,

Don't let the address fool you. I'm actually in Berlin. I finished up the forty-page hand-written report of my experimental work in a taxi on the way to the airport and then sat around for a couple of hours until my plane arrived. In the meantime a troop of soldiers marched out in perfect unison and stood half an hour in the drizzle awaiting a special military mission from Budapest. When the dignitaries emerged, everyone saluted, the soldiers said one big Hurrah, and all stood and listened to the Hungarian and Russian national anthems. After that about ten long black limousines whisked in to pick up visitors and visited, and they were off to the Kremlin.

I flew to Berlin in an Aeroflot Ilyushin-18 of the same type that crashed with an American buddy of mine on the way back to Moscow from Tashkent a month ago.⁵⁸ I must be an optimist. Whereas after a crash like that a pessimist would say, "You see... those planes aren't trustworthy; better avoid them," I think to myself, "The probability is one in a thousand that anything will happen, and it's already happened on the other flight. So I should be safe!"

I came through from East to West Berlin with no trouble. A woman from Colombia was on the plane, returning from a

⁵⁸ The friend who crashed was Dennis Papazian, a grad student in political science from the University of Michigan. He drove the Komsomol crazy by holding bull sessions in the dormitory lounge with lively discussions of Soviet and American politics.

Cancer Congress in Moscow. She had a prepaid tourist plan. According to the plan, a West Berlin taxi was waiting for her at the East Berlin airport (Shönefeld). Sure enough, the cab showed up and I got to ride with her, thus avoiding a three hour bus and train ride. Also the driver was able to tell us a little about, mostly still bombed out, points of interest.

Seventeen years after the end of WWII the central part of East Berlin is still rubble. West Berlin hasn't been completely rebuilt, but at least the ruins have been cleared and many institutions reestablished. The cross-point at Friedrichstrasse is as attractive as the East Berliners can make it. Your taxi stops at a red and white candy striped railroad-type crossing barrier, and you show a cop your transit visa. The barrier swings up and the taxi proceeds to a neat small rectangular building ringed on the outside by fresh pink and white flowers. The taxi parks in front at the East entrance to the building. You get out and walk across a broad springy plank of plywood to keep from getting your feet in the puddle of rain water beneath. Inside another officer examines your passport and visa with great care. You board the taxi again. It winds left, right and left again between two long concrete blocks that are positioned to keep East Germans from getting a truck up to speed and barreling through to the Western Zone. The blocks are also painted with cheerful red and white candy stripes. You proceed to a second railroad-type barrier at the opening in the real Wall. Just outside the Wall, on the left, is a grandstand that allows tourists to climb up for a view and to take pictures of East Berlin. The first sights that struck me as we passed into West Berlin were the immense number of cars, the amount of junk in store windows, and how good it is to see flashy apolitical, commercial neon signs.

I arrived not knowing whether to stay until the ninth of September, when I can go to Wolfsburg for the VW we ordered a couple of months ago. It turns out that all of the Hefter family with whom I stayed last fall are away, but they still have their home here. The housekeeper has offered to let me sleep there, so I'll stay. This is especially good because she doesn't speak English. It'll give me a good breaking-in period for speaking German.

Love,
Doug

**Welcome Rock 'n Roll and German Pop
Travel Plans**

8 August 1962
3 Murellenweg
Charlottenburg 9
Berlin, West Germany

Dear Folks,

It really feels good to be in Berlin. The American Forces radio station plays real down-home rock 'n roll, which for me is like fresh air. The German is coming along slowly but surely... I should say, "fast but not so surely." Every day I feel that I've made weeks of progress in the past twenty-four hours, but then I turn on the radio and still don't understand a thing. Right now it's a German pop group singing a song with chorus, "...boys 'n girls, boys 'n girls, boys 'n girls..." Several I've heard are like that, a German pop song on a theme set by a couple of English words like "Mr. Moon" or "boys 'n girls".

I've bought an airplane ticket for Hannover Thursday the ninth. Interestingly, a round trip ticket costs two Marks (about fifty cents) less than a one-way ticket. The West Berlin city administration wants people who go out to come back. It's very handy for me, because it means that I can come back to Berlin after I ship the VW from Hamburg. Don't know yet what day I'll reach Munich, but it'll probably be between the tenth and the twelfth. The weather here is nothing to brag about, but I go swimming almost every day and feel like a million dollars... if that means anything these days. I will be back here the last week in August.

Love, Doug

**Wolfsburg, Braunschweig, Cologne,
Bonn & Stuttgart
Room with a Viewing in Munich**

16 August 1962
c/o Roloff
23 Regerstrasse
Munich/Loccham
West Germany

Dear Folks,

I got to Munich Tuesday afternoon, having spent the night with a friend of Ekhart's in Stuttgart. But maybe I should go back and tell you where I've been. As you know I arrived in Berlin August 1. On the ninth, last Thursday, I flew to Hannover and took a train to Wolfsburg. I got to the VW factory at two. By three-thirty I was in my fancy turquoise VW (See enclosed color sample.) and on the way to Braunschweig with Ekhart Hefter, who had met me in Wolfsburg. He, his wife Diete and their new daughter Anna are living with his parents-in-law near Braunschweig. Saturday noon Ekhart and I set out for Cologne and Bonn. His mother has just taken a position as head of the foreign student office at Cologne University. (That might be the job for you, Mom!). Cologne and Bonn are very close to each other, about fifteen miles. His aunt works in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so we got a Cook's Tour of the Provisional Government in Bonn.

* * *

When World War II ended in 1945 the Soviet Army had taken East Germany. The territory it occupied became recognized by the Soviet Union as the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The Soviets declared the GDR a sovereign nation separate from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which was occupied by the Western Allies: the US, Britain and France. In 1949 the FRG established a 'Provisional Capital' in Bonn; it never officially recognized East Germany as an independent nation. Forty years later, in

1989, Gorbachev terminated the Brezhnev Doctrine of Soviet control over the internal politico-economic affairs of countries in Eastern Europe. That action effectively ended the Cold War and was a major factor in Gorbachev's being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize a year later. The Gorbachev Doctrine led within a year to free elections in the GDR, defeat of the Communist Party there and in most of the nations of Eastern Europe, dissolution of the GDR and reunification of Germany. Berlin was quickly restored as the capital, and offices of the federal government gradually were moved from Bonn back to the traditional capital. The transfer was officially completed when the reunified German Parliament met in Berlin in 1999.

* * *

Monday the VW got her 300-mile check-up (at 600 miles) and I headed for Munich. Monday night I stopped over in Stuttgart with a metallurgist friend of Ekhart's. He showed me the sights, including a restaurant atop the TV tower that is similar the Seattle Space Needle, though not as graceful. Tuesday morning he accompanied me out to the Stanford in Germany campus about half an hour from Stuttgart. After that I continued on to Munich and picked up my mail at the American Express Office.

I had the name and work address of a friend of Dave Lindsley and the name and address of the mother of another friend of Ekhart's.⁵⁹ I didn't feel I should show up on either of those doorsteps without having made some effort to find a room for the first night. There was no information bureau in the American Express Office, and the phone booth on the street was busy, so I went around the corner to a small travel agency. I

⁵⁹ Dave's friend was Otto Creutzfeldt, a neurophysiologist who had been at UCLA's Brain Research Institute a year earlier and now had a laboratory at the Max Planck Institute for Psychiatry in Munich.

asked a couple of girls there if I could use the phone book to look up Dave's friend but found only the name of the Institute. One of the girls saw I was having trouble and made the call for me. It turned out there were several Otto Creutzfeldts in the Institute, though I still find that hard to believe, and she had to call several times before she reached mine... or his office anyway. He'd gone. So I left.

I hadn't gone far before it occurred to me that I might find a place for the night through that agency. The girls certainly spoke German a thousand times better than I. So I returned. They called about five places with no luck and ended up suggesting I come home with them. They live in an apartment house not far from the city center and were having a get together in the evening with a photographer. He was to show slides from trips to Spain for a group of students who live in the same apartment house.⁶⁰ All worked out well and the next day, yesterday, was a holiday, so we all went to an art gallery, and then, in a three car caravan, managed to locate the house of the mother of Ekhart's friend, Frau Roloff. Her son had told her to expect me, and she was all set to give me one of her four sons' rooms. So here I am. Today I've been to the Institute and must get back there. For a couple of days it looked as though I might be slowing down, but I guess not.

Love, Dou

Language Conference in West Berlin

31 August 1962
c/o Hefter

⁶⁰ It turned out that the photographer was a free lancer for *Playboy*; the photos he shared were not of Spanish landscapes.

Berlin-Charlottenburg 9
3 Murellenweg
Deutschland

Dear Folks,

I'm about ready to pack up and come home... or go swimming. This conference isn't very interesting. The main impression I get is how much extremely specialized, detailed, and sometimes boring work goes into solving one big simple problem, namely, machine translation. The general opinion is that, at best, they won't have anything really marketable for another five to ten years, so I guess I'll be able to finish putting myself through med school translating Russian articles.

Doug

* * *

Even ten years was a huge underestimate of the time that would be required to solve the challenges of machine translation. Fifty years later Google is making reasonable headway at translating website contents roughly from one language to another. But even their system is far from reliable enough to substitute for human translation of literary works, scientific material or legal documents.

* * *

Reentry Impressions Boston Customs

13 September 1962
Boston

Dear Folks,

It sure is good to be back in my own fish bowl. It feels like I have to swim just as fast, but somehow the water is smoother. As I arrange to register and insure the VW I get an impression of the extent to which small, subtle factors affect ones mobility in this age of hyper-organization. For instance, I recall right off that the bureau that registers scooters and cars is called the Registry of Motor Vehicles, that you don't look it up under 'Registry of Motor Vehicles' but under the 'Commonwealth of Massachusetts', and that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts isn't under 'Commonwealth of Massachusetts' but under "Massachusetts, Commonwealth of".

When the woman at the Registry says that I must have my car insured first and that I must go to the Assigned Risks Bureau to do it, I of course look that up in the phone book. When it's not listed by that name, I have no hesitation whatever to call an insurance company at random and ask the first person to answer the phone for the number of the Assigned Risk Bureau. Rather than go directly there I know to call first. It's about 3:55 and I don't feel the slightest sense of persecution when they say they close at four o'clock. But just think of all the places a foreigner could get hung up in this situation. Maybe some obstacles I ran looking for a radio supply store in Moscow a year ago, or to pick up a package at the MSU post office, were not premeditated after all.

I got into Boston early yesterday morning and was disappointed at the long time required to pass Customs here in the old country. Maybe I'm becoming too critical in my old age, but the traveler arriving in this country gets nothing like the swift efficient processing he gets in Frankfurt or London, or even Moscow for that matter (though admittedly I had a Party man from the University running interference for me when I went through Russian Customs last year). Here at the international airport in Boston you come in through what looks like the back door to a small-town train station. As a US citizen you simply show your health certificate. A foreigner intending to stay for a year has to carry a large, duly-signed envelope with his chest x-ray, which the guy examining it wouldn't know from a head x-ray. You show your passport and tell what iron-curtain countries you've been in and how long. Then you wait thirty minutes for passengers of the previous plane to retrieve their baggage and another ten to fifteen minutes to get your own. That's where the real hold up is. They bring the luggage in by hand rather than by conveyor and don't have enough customs inspectors to go through it is as fast as in Europe. I'm not sure to whom I should send a letter of suggestion. Do you ever get the impression I'm a little quick to tell other people how to do their job?!

Love from a sleepy
Doug

Fast forward thirty years to 25 December 1991, Christmas Day in the West, when the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist. The centralized command economy of the Socialist state quickly dissolved into a market economy. The government abruptly stopped or severely reduced salaries to employees of all institutions, including the academic and research institutions where most of my friends worked. At the same time the economy underwent a wrenching inflation. Within less than a year the value of the ruble fell by a factor of twenty-five. So a faculty member earning the equivalent of \$250 per month was, by the fall of 1992, taking home the equivalent of \$10... if he still had a job. A professor friend, who continued performing his responsibilities at MSU during the week, took a second job week-ends delivering catalogues for a commercial enterprise. In early February, 1992 I went to Moscow for three days to deliver a few hundred dollars to several families of friends of mine and families of Russian émigrés whom I knew in the US. The following letter was written to my wife Vivian.

* * *

**Passing Customs Six Weeks after the Collapse
Fear of Post-Soviet Dictatorship Outweighs
Fear of Deprivation
Banking Problems**

7 February 1992
Moscow

Dear Viv,

I arrived at Sheremetevo Airport by Scandinavian Airlines on time at five-thirty p.m. The line at Passport Control was short and no challenge. I picked up my baggage at the conveyor... knew I was in Russia when the baggage for our flight came in on the conveyor marked for another airline and vice versa.

It's a good thing you had me strap the bags. For one thing the red straps helped me find them; for another, one bag had come in earlier and was dumped in a pile where it could

easily have sprung open considering the weight of the contents: canned meats, cheese, etc.

The baggage carts at Sheremetevo are much lighter and better than in the old days. I needed a cart, because I had three suitcases and a briefcase. The customs check occurs in two lines: red if you have something to declare, green if not. I had filled out declaration slips for the \$4,610 I carried. The red route sign said currency had to be declared, but I wasn't sure whether that meant just rubles or all currencies. Something in the wording of the declaration slip had suggested the former, and I wasn't eager to open my wallet and the sub-shirt money-vest you had had made if I didn't have to. There was a line at the red route and none at the green. So I approached the green to ask whether I had to go red. The blond young officer read my slip, marked it, stamped it and waved me through. A far cry from the old days!⁶¹

They didn't even check my baggage tags. As a much-travelled Russian friend commented when I saw him later, one could walk through with an H-bomb and never be detected. He says Russian citizens pass with equally cursory inspection. There are no restrictions on their import of hard currency.

Our friends met me at the gate with a young engineer neighbor who had a well-running Zhiguli (Russian Fiat) to transport us to their apartment. The exit was mobbed with taxi drivers of variable demeanor, from clean shaven to Captain

⁶¹ The inspection on exit three days later would be equally blasé. I had filled out both the entrance and exit customs slips with the same currency amount. It turned out the second slip was for recording currency on me at exit. I began to explain that to the officer, but he wasn't interested. He marked and filed both, in the trash I presume, because he knew it was not accurate.

Hook in rabbit fur *shapka*.⁶² By the time we reached the apartment twenty minutes later it was clear that I would not need to stay at the Hotel Molodezhnaia, where I had reservations. That was an experience I was not looking forward to, but having brought my tea heater, long johns and toilet paper, I was prepared. Despite my protestations to the contrary, our friends insisted that I stay with them; they have a hideaway bed in the living room. The opportunity to stay there made the difference between what would have been a very alien experience and a feeling of being at home. While the hotel phones may not be bugged any longer, they probably don't work. They certainly don't have a friendly person standing by to give one a reality check when one is not sure whether things fail work because they're broken or by conspiracy. So I did not regret giving up the hotel room. Regardless of where I actually stayed I would have had to pay the eighty bucks a night (\$240 total) in order to get the voucher necessary to get the visa, which was necessary to get here at all.

We had tea and a bite to eat and exchanged a lot of news. I delivered all the foods, which were appreciated. Our friends have not only themselves to care for, but they also care for his ninety-two-year old mom who lives nearby, her own mother who lives in a village outside Moscow and her elderly aunt. She says the cost and lack of meat and cheese (I think they said they haven't seen cheese for a year and a half) are not as demoralizing as the amount of time one spends standing in lines to get what is available. Still, for special occasions it is truly amazing what a classy meal she can put together... everything from apples to a big pork roast for the Sunday afternoon dinner

⁶² 'Shapka': a Russian fur hat.

with Olga S., an old friend from Sokolov's lab. I'd bet there's not another home or hotel in Moscow that ate better than we that week-end.

People are the most frank and open about present and past hopes and fears than I have ever experienced in Russia, in fact anywhere. Several told me individually that the thing they fear most at this point is not deprivation of food, medicines or material goods but dictatorship and/or civil war. These possibilities are discussed continuously on TV and in the papers, and there was a big demonstration on Red Square Sunday where apparently almost as many were calling for a return of Communism as vice versa.

I called for Boris⁶³ at his son's apartment. He had said he would try to stay in Moscow for my arrival before returning to Sukhumi. Part of the reason may have been the closure of the airport at Sukhumi and its occupation by security forces following the return of Gamsakhurdia by that route a week earlier.⁶⁴ At any rate, he came to our friends' apartment Saturday morning and we had two or three good hours in which to go over the desirability and feasibility of an emergency aid fund for families of people at the primate research center. It's clear that Boris himself would avoid in every way possible accepting personal support. He feels

⁶³ Boris Lapin, Director of the Russian primate center, which at that time was still located in Sukhumi, Abkhazia now in Sochi, immediately across the border in Russia.

⁶⁴ Zviad Gamsakhurdia was, during the Soviet Period, a politically dissident Georgian scientist and writer. He was a leader in Georgia's move for independence, which began a year before the Soviet Union collapsed. He was elected the first president of independent Georgia in May 1991. His term in office was only ten months, however. He was forced into exile about a month before this was written and died violently under disputed circumstances ten months later.

acutely, however, the problems of his people and the danger to unique scientific resources in the present situation. He will make every effort to implement whatever we come up with. If we find a way to support the center, he wants to enlarge the scope somewhat to include supporting preservation of unique cell-lines and other kinds of research resources. With intermittent electricity, heat and water shortages at the center, those are real problems. I agreed and we drafted a memorandum of understanding of what we want to do.

I called one of your dad's UN friends later to see about the possibility of opening an account for the Russian primate center's fund in a nongovernment bank. Every last nickel of the center's quarter-million dollar Western currency reserves from animal sales have been 'frozen', i.e., disappeared for the foreseeable future, if not forever, in the government's Vnesheconombank effort to pay off foreign creditors. Boris had looked into banking possibilities too. Monday we tried several leads, but hit brick walls everywhere. Either we couldn't get through by phone, or the response was, "We aren't interested in accounts that do not involve millions." Not aspiring to that class of account, I finally turned over the first installment of the fund and we agreed to continue seeking a way to make future transfers.

Our friends have been very helpful in making contact with relatives of Natalya and Irina, for whom I carried about seven-hundred altogether. Irina's father, a retired nuclear rocket engineer came to pick up hers. He stayed to write a long letter, which I'm bringing back. Sunday Natalya's brother-in-law came to pick up hers. It was a life saver that our friends were open to having these folks come to the apartment rather

than my having to meet them somewhere, another sign of the thaw as well as of their basic generosity.

Love, and looking forward to being home soon,

Doug

* * *

Fast forward another fifteen years to October, 2007. I was winding up a five-year neuroanatomy project that involved annual treks to the Russian primate center, now located near Sochi at Russia's southern border with Abkhazia. I obtained brain specimens of macaque monkeys, which I brought back to the US for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and histological analyses. The greatest challenge of the project was passing security at Moscow's Sheremetevo airport. The following letter, addressed to colleagues at the Russian center, describes my experiences on that final trip.

* * *

Post-Soviet Bureaucracy - The More Things Change...

2 October 2007

Seattle

Email to:

Boris A. Lapin, Director

Evgeniia M. Cherkovich, Assistant to the Director

Research Institute of Medical Primatology

Sochi, Russia

Dear Boris, Zhenya et al.,

I arrived in Seattle with the specimens as scheduled, at three in the afternoon today. The trip was not without the usual excitement at the airport. I arrived at Sheremetevo at 6:30 a.m. for an 8:45 flight. I tried the door to the Veterinary Inspection Office. It was locked and no one answered. I waited until a little after seven and tried again. The door was still locked, so I knocked hard. A little blond woman opened it immediately.

She said that she could not accept the official stamp on the veterinary authorization document that I had obtained from the same office the day before. As far as she was concerned it was not adequate evidence that the expiration date

of the document had been extended. She was very angry at the woman who had given the stamp without writing a note to her, and angry at me too of course for putting her in a *kashmar* (nightmare) of a situation, *Bezobrazie!* (outrageous) and a few other comments that I'm glad I did not understand. She finally called the woman who had given the stamp, gave her a ten-minute tongue-lashing telling her repeatedly that there was no way she would let me pass.

I asked to talk to her boss, whom she finally called and talked to herself. The boss listened to her rave about the impossible position the other woman had imposed on her, about this American who "understands nothing" and sits at her desk "demanding the impossible", etc. etc.... (Oh, and she said the letter from Boris was not from the right institution!⁶⁵ I didn't pursue that issue, because she seemed to forget it by the time she called her boss.) Finally the boss calmed her down, told her what to do, and she started filling out the forms. Periodically she barked at me that it was unlikely that she could complete this process in time for me to make my flight.

She apparently did not know how to fill out the forms, so she took down a thick notebook and looked up all of the forms that had been filled out for me in previous years and started copying information to the new form. Some of the information from previous years was incorrect this year, but I thought it better not to confuse her with the facts. When she finished and I had all the forms in hand, she told me that I should have come earlier. I informed her that I had been there a half hour earlier and knocked at the door. She said, "No, you

⁶⁵ Boris Lapin: Director of the Research Institute of Medical Primatology at Sochi, who had sent the document attesting that the specimens originated at his institute.

didn't knock; you just rattled the door handle." She had been there all the time! That was the first new adventure.

The second, and happily the last adventure, occurred at the gate. There an inspector was concerned that the physiological saline in the jars that contained the specimens might be dangerous. So she put in repeated calls to the 'chemical police'. Eventually, after all of the other three hundred passengers had boarded the plane, the head man showed up. I recognized him from my adventures of earlier years, and I'm sure he recognized me. But we both understood that this event needed to play out as an entirely new experience. By then I had learned that it was better to call the saline solution a 'mixture of table salt and water'. He looked through my papers for the (n+1)th time. He finally accepted my statement that the veterinary document had been filled out that very day and waved me through. To keep my spirits up, I'm sure; he said that I might have trouble passing Security in Paris. So, while I was probably the first passenger to reach the airport that morning, I successfully preserved my record of being the last to check in and last to board my flight! Paris Security paid no

attention to the specimens, so I made it home without further incident.

Thanks again for your ever-reliable support for this project. I hope that we will see each other again in the not too distant future.

Sincerely,
Doug

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The year that I lived in the Soviet Union crystallized much of the way I think about life: personally, philosophically, scientifically, and politically. I want to thank the individuals and institutions that made it possible: Dave Arnold, the friend who flicked the switch that set me on track to Russia; Karl Pribram, my research mentor at Stanford, who made the first contacts with E.N. Sokolov and A.R. Luria, who in turn became my much-respected research mentors in Moscow; the governments of the US and the USSR, for establishing the graduate student exchange program; the IUCTG at Indiana University, for accepting me into the program with borderline linguistic competence, simply because I was the sole candidate in a scientific discipline; the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, which financed the exchange program; Stanford University, which allowed me to take a year away from medical studies to study neural mechanisms of behavior in a Pavlovian lab; and the unnamed Russian friends whom I shall never forget for

their contributions to my enjoyment and personal growth, both during that year and in the half century since.

In addition I want to thank the several individuals who critiqued the manuscript for their patience and excellent suggestions: Bruce Bowden, Jim and Marianne LoGerfo, Rolf Goetze, Helen Zimmerman, Mark Dubach, Pete Francis, Nancy Roeder and Dan Storm.

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