
Two Weeks by Train: The Diary of a Canadian Visitor to Soviet Russia and the Soviet Ukraine, May 3-18, 1931

by Phil Malkin

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The following is the diary of a Canadian who visited Soviet Russia in May of 1931. The author, Phil Malkin of Vancouver, BC, kept an account of his trip and provided the same to his friend, Ernest L. Harris, American Consul General in Vienna. —T.D.

May 3, 1931.

I woke up this morning at 8:00 o'clock to find myself crossing the border into Lithuania.... Lithuania has no diplomatic relationship with Poland on account of the quarrel about Vilnius which was their old capital — the railways from Vilnius to Lithuania are not being used but Poland retains that section running up to the borders of Latvia....

Kovno looks like a Western Canadian town with its shacks and tin roofs. In fact the whole country looks like agricultural Canada but the people are so different. A trip through the train to the Dining Car reveals all sorts.

In the 3rd Class on wooden seats are peasants with kettles and food and suitcases so crowded in — quite unnecessarily uncomfortable but very uncomplaining. In the first class are people one might see anywhere, there being only a subtle difference in dress and in the Wagon Lits...

May 4, 1931.

I was up at 6:00 o'clock to go through the Russian customs at Ostrov. I duly counted out my money

and declared my gold watch — all books, papers were taken out of grip and looked over by a higher official. He could make nothing of Shakespeare's Tragedies which is all the reading I have except for a Russian Guide Book in English, printed by the Soviet. I had an orange in my compartment and threw the skin out of the window. The rind was immediately pounced on by a peasant woman and thrust into her pocket. At the station there were crowds of peasants on the platform, so many that they could hardly squeeze in.

We left Ostrov with the steps of the train crowded with peasants hanging on. One poor cripple boy with a crutch and a bundle could not get on and ran after the train for a way, sobbing his heart out. The guard laughed at him. And so it continued all day: the carriages crowded, the stations crowded, women with handkerchiefs round their heads, men with fur coats, padded coats, patched coats, men barefoot carrying their shoes, men with sandals and socks tied round their legs, just a few passably dressed people but mostly a drab lot of very miserable looking people. The train was very slow and continually stopped, sometimes for as much an hour, as it did at Pskov. There were villages and farms all the way, never one of them painted or neat. All were built of wood — drab, dreary, and desolate. The soldiers were untidy and had dirty uniforms. There were no shops in sight at the stations. It was a nice day — sun shining, blue sky — but what a depressing sight. I missed spotting the usual churches, only seeing two all day. This must have always been a poor part of the country.

We arrived in Leningrad at 5:30 and found no

one to meet me. I remembered hearing of The Europa Hotel and drove there to find the hotel's Intourist Office. They did not know I was coming but fixed me up all right in a room and bath. It was shabby, with just one thin towel and water and newspapers instead of toilet paper.

The drive here from the station up rough streets through a mile or more of shut up shops with windows boarded up is the most trying and depressing thing I have ever experienced. The point policemen directing the now existing traffic with red staffs are dirty and shabby but the street cars are full.

The shops were formerly occupied by private traders which are now practically nonexistent — everyone is a servant of the State. The State runs this hotel but I see the waiters expect tips and good ones, too, considering the rate of exchange. I got 9.85 rubles per pound sterling. In Vienna I could have bought 30 rubles per pound but would not have been allowed to bring them into the country.

The hors d'oeuvres of smoked salmon, caviar, and hot toast at dinner were good, the soup was poor, the chicken impossibly tough, and the ice cream inedible. I met my guide after dinner, a pretty, well dressed girl with plenty of lipstick and a nice accent who took me to a movie where we saw an account of the old regime, depicted in damning colors of corruption, graft, and vileness in comparison with the glorious present.

Walking home she said, "We have no unemployment."

I said, "Then you have no poverty."

"Oh, yes, we have," she said naively, "for we have not reached the ideal state yet."

When buying some cigarettes tonight I had to produce my certificate showing I had changed foreign money into rubles. I didn't happen to have my certificate with me. They would not take my word and I had to go to my room to get it. On our way home I saw a State grocery shop open. They kept open until 11:45. The window was full of canned apricots in one kilo tins selling at 4 rubles (\$2) each. As these cost less than 15 cents a tin in California, this is a handsome tax on the consumer. Russian red wine is 12 rubles a quart. Vodka is 10 rubles per half litre. With these prices there is not much chance to be a drinking man. Cigarettes cost 1 ruble for 20 — thus, not much chance

to smoke, either. A loud wireless radio speaker on the street corner blared away outside.

May 5, 1931. Leningrad.

Of course one's judgments must to some extent be influenced by one's guide. Mine is a simple girl much more devoted to art than to politics. Miss Irina Solovieva is very naive and reflects, I suppose, the mentality of her generation. She said twice today that Russia had not reached the ideal social state *yet*, but evidently remained full of faith that such a state would be reached.

Leningrad is a mass of untidy desolation. No buildings have been renovated or painted, the streets are full of holes, the people are uniformly drab. Red slogans are plastered everywhere. What a power over the millions the Communist Party has! Russia is a living example of the power of advertising.

I learned today the difference between self-criticism and criticism of the Party, which is considered counterrevolutionary. One may make concrete criticism of the man and his actions, efficiency or inefficiency, but one must not criticize Socialism in any way or one is sent to the improvement house.

"To jail," said I crudely.

"Yes," said she, "a sort of prison."

Or one may be sent to Siberia. In other words, freedom of expression is definitely denied.

I went to a so-called nice beer shop for a drink. It was full. The tables were dirty and no one smiled. The waiters were slovenly and beer cost a ruble a glass. Just think of it — 50 cents! And at lunch I ordered a pint of beer and in the Europa here they charged me 2-1/2 rubles — that is, 5 shillings or \$1.25. I went out boiling with rage.

From a sight-seeing standpoint it has been a good day. We started out at 10 o'clock and sauntered taking photos up the main shopping street. There were no shops to look at, as the shops open at 11 o'clock. We walked to the Winter Palace, opposite which was consummated Bloody Sunday in 1905. We also went to the Hermitage Museum, one of the great galleries of Europe. I found a picture to remember, a Reubens portrait of a woman that was beautiful and quite different from his usual flamboyant style. The Golden Scythian remains were also fascinating. In order to see

these we signed a registration book and were locked in.

On the way home we went to St. Isaac's Greek church. A service was going on and a beautiful quartet was singing. The priest's voice was a gorgeous bass and he boomed out his responses so that they echoed all over the building. There was a few devote souls attending, but not many. The church was shabby and the poor attendants looked pinched, worn, and tattered.

This afternoon we drove and saw the Rest House on the Neva. These are all villas taken at the revolution. More dreary rest houses I have never seen. Males were scarce but many ill-favored women attendants were in evidence. The roads are shocking. The grass on the gardens was uncut.

Afterwards, we went to a club house, evidently a showplace, but very dreary, full of Red propaganda but no life. I think the Russians are very childlike if they think foreigners can be favorably impressed by a visit these days. They need a paint factory and a few gardeners and a lot more goods in their stores. They seem to imagine they have found the truth and their enthusiasm carries them along. A generation has arisen which thinks scarcely of clothes and food and that general shabbiness and tawdry Red slogans is normal and right. Like sheep they follow on. After all, it is the character of a people that makes them, not the theory of their government. And the people seem to be innately docile and willing to follow their leaders.

It was very interesting to trace the revolutionary Headquarters of the Emergency government (Kerensky), and of the Bolsheviks, and the balcony from which the British Ambassador addressed the crowds, and so on. The old Field of Mars, now the Square of the Victims of the Revolution, has a tomb in the middle, the walls of which are already out of plumb.

They have funny meal hours here. Dinner is from 3 to 6 and supper 9 to 12.

Gene Tunney and his wife arrived today and I went to the Russian Ballet with them in the evening. What a wonderful entertainment that was. A whole story was told in pantomime with exquisite dancing. Tunney introduced himself nicely and was quite interesting. Tunney has a firm belief in the success of the Five Year Plan. He says Communism will spread like Mohammedanism and that a great fight is coming.

He also told me of a shop in Moscow where goods are cheap and which takes nothing but foreign money. He says the rate is 75 rubles to the pound in Moscow.

Tunney also says the Europa is better than the Moscow hotels and that the people here are better dressed than in the capital. Heaven help Moscow! ...

May 6, 1931. Leningrad.

I have just returned from a modern Russian opera, the title of which translated as "Front and Rear" (of the Army). The opera has put the coping stone on the day's impression, which is: Skillful propaganda.

Today we walked over the fields which the Red Army reached. One of our guides, with flashing eyes, told us how the workers of Leningrad were comprised of men and women who were starving but that they nevertheless marched out to defeat the Whites. Lenin had said that the Leningrad proletariat was the finest in Russia, for they began and finished the Revolution.

I must again and again refer to propaganda as it seems to be in everything. One must remember that a generation has grown up knowing nothing else but this, living in shabby surroundings with few of the amenities of life and knowing nothing better. My guide is 23 years old, born in Leningrad, and therefore was 10 years old at the time of the revolution. She remembers hearing the guns and hearing of all her family going out to dig trenches. She remembers the barricades, for she says they would never have given in, but every house would have been a fortress. She remembers the famine of 1920 and saw people drop dead on the street from starvation. Leningrad saw the population dwindle to 800,000 from 1,905,000 and has subsequently seen it come back until now there are more than 2 million people here. She has been educated on this propaganda and believes with the rest of Russia that all their ills come from capitalism and that communism will save them, bring them prosperity, and eventually will conquer the world. She does not believe in the family, feeling it is selfish and antisocial. I suppose she is simply representative of this generation.

It is extraordinary how soon one becomes accustomed to the dilapidation one sees everywhere. Already I don't notice it. What must it be like to one who lives and breathes it all the time and has never known anything different? To one who at the same

time has been taught that they are living in a new age, in an era that will make history and change the current of world events?

Here is a people that is docile and used to being ruled by a small, effective group with absolute power, a group which knows what it wants and engaged in carrying it out. The whole of the non-peasant population save 3% are servants — servants of the State. The State narrows down to a small and powerful committee who rule. So far as one can see they are using that power for the good of the State as they see it and not for personal gain. Of course they have a few luxuries — a motorcar to take them about, a room or house — but they earn not more than 225 rubles a month. Such a state is inconceivable to us, but such facts must be recognized.

Gene Tunney said that this thing “Communism” would spread like Mohammedanism and would cause the biggest fight the world had ever seen. For one and all agree the Five Year Plan is going to succeed... But after that what? The imponderables the Germans forgot in the Great War never stop working — freedom of life, speech, action, and thought. Here one cannot think or speak individually if one wishes to keep out of jail. One nation with a single thought and aim, even if the aim is wrong — what can it not accomplish before it is stopped?

Yet mother nature still exists. This morning as I walked with my guide, I asked her, “Why do all the women look at you?”

She said, “They don’t look at me, they look at my clothes.”

And it is so. I watched the women and they looked at her with spiteful envy — envy because she is dressed as an average smart stenographer might be. Her nose is powdered and she uses lipstick and for Leningrad looks smart. Hence envy. The looks mean not “I would like a coat like that” but “Why the deuce can that hussy dress like that when I can’t?”

We drove out today over rough roads to Tsarskoe Selo, the home of the Tsars. In the party were Mr. and Mrs. Tunney, an author from Seattle writing a book on Russia named Ellery Walter, Congressman Andrews, two wives of American engineers en route to Siberia, and myself. On the way we stopped and saw a bit of old Russia which showed us that religion and the old church were not dead. Today is April 23rd

by the old Russian calendar and is St. George’s Day. On this day the priest goes to the village in full canonicals with flags and icons and sprinkles holy water on the animals to bring about good health and fertility. We saw the whole service: animals brought up and sprinkled; chants; singing. The whole village was present and this only 5 miles away from Leningrad. It makes me realize that what all the writers say about the peasant being the Great Conundrum is true. We did notice that the men were old, that children were there but not many young men. So the incident may be of significance or not.

At Tsarskoe Selo are two palaces, an old one by Tsarina Elisabeth and a newer one by Catherine the Great. The museum and palaces of Russia were not touched by the revolution and are splendidly kept up inside — although outside they are dilapidated. They are clean, with floors polished. You must put felt covers on your feet. And thousands go through them daily, children especially, taken by their schoolmasters.

Propaganda again. There is at the entrance always a place where the epoch is explained from a Communist viewpoint. For instance in Elisabeth’s Palace is shown how both she and Catherine the Great owed their throne to a revolution. Hence revolution is right and neutral.

The saddest and most pathetic thing is to go through the New Palace where the last Tsar lived since 1900. They were a quiet, happy family and the walls remain covered with family pictures. The furniture is modern and not in good taste — in fact it looks like a prosperous Mid-Victorian merchant’s house.

The History of the Tsarina’s relations with various healers for the poor little Tsarevich is set out, ending with Rasputin. The tale is well told, how this man ruled Russia because he ruled the Tsarina. And the Tsarina ruled the Tsar. She could not be present at meetings with his ministers, but she had a balcony built joining her rooms with his and could listen. Nicholas must have been the weakling which Trotsky says he is. Nicholas’ opportunity came in 1905 on Bloody Sunday — with just a few privileges granted and the course of history would have been changed. Up until then the people blamed the ministers; after that they lost faith in the Tsar.

I had dinner with Ellery Walter, author of *Rome and the World*, and currently writing a book on young

Russia and Congressman Andrews. Walter is very interesting. We are all in a fog about things here but shall meet again....†

May 7, 1931. Leningrad.

I got my guide to take me this morning to one of the markets I had noticed yesterday while en route to the Tsar's Palace. This is not one of the places to which tourists are generally taken but in all fairness I must say the visitor is also not routed on a special round — especially when travelling alone as I am doing. One simply expresses a preference and is taken. The market, one of many, was thronged with thousands of people. Stalls lined the streets selling pitiful little lots of potatoes, fish, pins, elastic bands — in fact, anything. These were independent traders, of course, showing that in spite of all obstacles the urge to private trade still exists. We skirted the crowd, among which were some of the most piteous objects I have ever seen: nearly naked, filthy, and diseased. Never in any large city have I seen such misery — and so callously disregarded.

Coming away I asked my guide how these people lived and she callously replied that it was their own fault, there was plenty of work and that the miserable creatures lying around were simply drunk. I don't believe it. Her remark was just on a par with the laugh of the guard on the train at the poor cripple unable to get on. This is another aspect of the country: the poor here are particularly poor while the better off, especially those of the young generation, don't know of anything better than the semi-sordid way in which they are living. Wages run from 80 rubles to 300 rubles a month, the work week consisting of four days on before one day off. There is no Sunday. The Russian wage will buy in our values not more than \$30 to \$100 per month.

Going to museums is the national sport, they are very busy. The Russian Museum is tremendous. We first went to the Ethnological Section, containing implements, dresses, etc. of the various peasants. I got one idea which perhaps explains their attitude to the family, a model of a rich peasant house. The house was made so large because the tradition was for the

sons' wives to come and live with the father-in-law. The family did not like to separate, that was the custom. One can take this a step further and have State Communal Houses. Apparently the Russian does not desire his own separate family in the same way we do.

We then saw a museum of Manners. First we saw the pre-war homes of the early landowners, the country merchant, the city merchant — all solidly comfortable. One then goes with that impression of comfort to the abode of a pre-war worker, cleverly done to represent the utmost in filth and squalor. A model of an iron worker stands — thin, gaunt and haggard, ragged and dirty.

Passing through to another room we saw pictures of modern Russia, a Russia I haven't seen. An iron worker had an immaculate blue suit, clean hands, and was carrying an oil can. Pictures of workers having a shower after work were seen. Other illustrations depicted men and women at work in the daytime and the same people in beautiful stage costumes taking part in theatricals in the evening. I think it possible that the whole country is hypnotized into believing what they are told is coming — just as the worshipper called the Tsar "Little Father" and believed in the saints and icons of the Greek Church.

One ends the museum with an electrical display, cleverly showing what the Five Year Plan is going to bring about in factories, plants, and railways, and what this will mean in terms of better conditions and happiness. One comes out in a daze, half mad and half believing and almost inclined to say as Faustus did, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Communist." Outside, soldiers were drilling. Slovenliness, unpainted dilapidation. Cord wood was piled in packs, broken railings. One wakes up to reality.

I saw the famous Russian queues this morning. The shops open at 11:00 o'clock and close at 7:00. My guide says the lines are made necessary by slow service when selling goods by means of cards and not by any shortage. This cannot be quite true. If they have the goods, where do they keep them? They are not in sight.

Russia imports no food. You can buy no oranges. I have seen no fresh fruit. They have their own as it comes in season. No good chocolates or biscuits. You

† - Ellery Walter did manage to find a home for his book — *Russia's Decisive Year*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.)

can buy tea and coffee, which are imported. I bought some note paper today — 6 sheets and 4 envelopes cost 40 kopecks, or 20 cents. If it is wrong for an individual to exploit another, is it right for the state to exploit the stranger within her gates? Rubles today were 9-3/8 to the Pound here and 50 to 60 to the Pound in Warsaw.

It is more difficult for an intellectual to get into the Communist Party than it was before the Trotsky affair. Intellectuals are apt to be more independent and to be willing to forego party discipline than the proletariat. One desiring to join has first to get 4 or 5 letters from members of the Party. He is then examined orally and in writing on his political knowledge — which means the writings of Marx, Lenin, etc., and of the history of the Party. He is then put on probation for 2 to 3 years during which time he is carefully watched and every move reported. If he is deemed satisfactory he is then accepted and his whole life is devoted to the Party. Whatever he has, his life itself, is at their disposal and he can subsequently accept no more than 225 rubles per month. Even then he is subject to espionage. Every so often the party has a purging when all cases are examined and many individuals are dismissed. It is an iron clad society.

There is at least one Communist in every state institution and factory. There is one or more in this hotel. At the head of each University is a committee of Party men. They do not act except on the recommendation of the committee of the students, which may or may not have a member of the Party in it. Students going to university, without funds, are allowed 80 rubles a month. This stipend is paid on the recommendation of a committee formed of one member of the professor's committee and one member of the students' committee and two or three others representing other governing committees. For instance, should a student have the ability to earn money by being able to teach languages or music or write, he would be expected to do so and would not be paid until he was able to prove that he was unable to do so. In return for this pay, the student has to perform various forms of social service. At the end of his course he has to in return go where and do what he is told for two or three years. If a doctor, he will be sent for two years to a village at the pay of 100 rubles per month. This system of appointments sometimes leads to conflict. For example, one girl

finished as a civil engineer at the government's expense, expecting to be used in Leningrad. She got married. Then she was ordered to work in Siberia for two years. She has so far refused to go and has appealed, stating that being married is a valid reason for her assignment. The committee will say no, that social life comes before private. Only one thing will save her: becoming pregnant. Should she refuse, she will be tried and punished. In fact, she will go.

The universities are also subject to purging. This particularly applies to intellectuals or to children of former officers. Even here, however, the law is winked at. One student of music, son of a former high official, was allowed to study because of his particular ability. For some reason he was expelled. His professor and classmates liked him. The professor and class agreed to wink at the fact of his expulsion and he continued to attend his classes, appealing in the meantime to Moscow. Towards the end of the term the student's appeal was allowed, so he finished his course without interruption. Had there been a Communist in the class, this situation would have been impossible, as it would have been a breach of faith not to make a report of the situation to the Party.

This evening I went to the church of St. Isaac, formerly the city's principal church, now turned into an anti-religious museum. There were a large number of parties being conducted through, mostly young men. They were being lectured to at each of the exhibits. Strange to say, the whole thing did not seem nearly so sacrilegious as I had anticipated. God and Christ were not in any way made fun of. The whole propaganda was against the church and priests and their business activities such as selling of icons, the manufacturing of lace and so on in monasteries, and most of all their close connection with the Tsarist state. One corner was devoted to pictures showing they had endeavored to picture the Tsar as God. A picture as published by them depicting the Tsarina and the Tsarevich as mother and child was given great prominence.

Returning to the hotel, I went to the room of Ellery Walter and Congressman Andrews and heard a most interesting discourse on the university by Walters, who is taking notes for a book and is writing for the *New York Tribune*. Most of what Walters told me I have written down above. The three of us then went for a walk and the fog in all our minds depressed us.

Their guide, Mrs. Dietrics, much older and more experienced than mine, was the talker and she impressed us very much with her earnestness. She was brought up in Germany and France, a daughter of well-off people who lost their money in the revolution. Nevertheless, she feels that "the Communist Party contains the germ that will save the world" and she would go to any lengths to defend it. She even went to the length of saying if it were given to her to choose between saving the life of her husband or a member of the Party, that she hoped she would do her duty and save the Communist — for every member of the party had a great value to Russia and the world.

Getting on the train, I found I was in the compartment with J.H. Pierce of Stuart, Janes and Cooke, 17 Battery Place, New York. He expects to be in Vancouver in September to examine properties in The Ingenika. He has been in Russia each year since 1926. He is a coal engineer and has many men working in Russia.

Pierce said the weak spot in the Five Year Plan was coal and railways. They are mining coal at 70% of their projected output and are much worried. The Russians won't stay in the mines, Pierce said, and as there is plenty of other work, the labor turnover is terrific. Although they are a way behind in production, they are exporting as they must pay for machinery imports. Last winter when they were exporting coal, Russia itself was shivering. Coal was rationed, and no house or apartment could be heated above 58 degrees.

When Canada refused to purchase Russian coal, they went to Brazil and traded it for coffee. That coffee is not coming to Russia; possibly Canada is buying it with other countries. It is absurd to refuse to trade with this country when every country in the world is at her doorstep asking for orders. Today they are the most independent people on earth. A German was here last week and lost an order for tool steel to Japan because Japan promised an earlier delivery. Pierce thinks there is no reason to fear Russia as an exporting country. She must make her own goods to raise her whole standard not only in the cities but in the countryside and this will take a generation. Bearing in mind that a maid of one of the American engineers came in smiling and said, "look at my nice, new shoes — they only cost 79 rubles and I only had to save up three months to get them," one realizes how scarce consumer goods

remain.

The Russians have their faults. Their enthusiasm boils over when sitting around the table discussing a plan. But once the plan is decided they forgot about it. Bureaucracy steps in and everything is left to someone else. Pierce said his recommendations were enthusiastically received but then would get no attention for months. Then they would call him over again. There is a great jealousy between departments. The Communists don't get money, but they do get power and they are extremely jealous of it. The Coal Trust planned to put up coal bunkers and docks. Plans were made and tentatively accepted, but no ratification came. After months an explanation was revealed. The Railway Trust was jealous and thought bunkers and sizing plants and docks were their business and not the Coal Trust's and so nothing is done yet. Human nature is still on the job.

There is log rolling in connection with the power plants. These are being rushed to completion. But they are often in such places that there are no factories for the new power facilities to serve. Having first built the power plant, they must then put up the factories.

Despite it all, progress is being made. Russia is the first nation to deliberately plan for 5 years ahead and to go through with it. The government is perhaps the strongest on earth today. There are no signs of dissatisfaction. The older people may be sour, but the younger ones are full of hope, enthusiasm, and faith.

May 8, 1931. Moscow.

I arrived at 10:10 on time after a very comfortable journey, bright sun and warm. I was sent to the Grand Hotel. The room was without bath, but was later changed. I took a walk around the Kremlin through the Red Square. Lenin's tomb is very impressive. I went to a Torgsin, a shop where only foreign money is taken and goods bought can be taken out of the country. Much jewelry of pre-war vintage was on sale, but not very cheap. The same vodka that was 10 rubles in Leningrad cost 1-1/2 rubles here. After lunch, I was taken on a drive over rough streets to Sparrow Hill, from the top of which Napoleon looked down upon the burning city, and to the new houses built for workmen, large areas of them.

Later I went to see Lenin. A queue of thousands

stretched out into the Red Square, but my guide spoke to a policeman and we were sent right in. I am told there is a queue like this every day. There he was, looking very natural in a glass case with two soldiers guarding him — very impressive. Lenin is rapidly becoming Russia's God. I went to Russian ballet in the evening. It was quite gorgeous.

May 9, 1931. Moscow.

My guide said as she was one of the enfranchised, she could join the cooperative stores. I asked her what she meant and it appears that for sympathy with the Whites, for old associations with the old government, and for being suspected of not supporting the present government, one is disenfranchised, can get no ration card, and must buy when and how one can. There are two scales of prices, the outside price being very high. How much lower the other is, I don't know. In the afternoon we went through the biggest Moscow store, crowded with people. The shelves were half filled and the store was poorly lighted, dirty, shabby, and smelling of humanity. One kilo tins of Russian peaches and pears were 4.50 r. per tin, one kilo tins of canned fish 3.75 r. per tin, and so on. I wanted some paper and envelopes as they had none in the hotel. They had none. We then went to 4 shops and could get none. So I am writing as small as possible as if I finish the paper in the notebook I am using, I can get no more.

The appearance of the whole store was most depressing and the people seen at closer quarters than at a glance on the street seemed shabbier. But one must remember, as Pierce says, from what depths they have climbed. Their condition in 1926 was so much worse. Today at least they have enough to eat, apparently, and are covered with clothes.

Coming from the ballet on the Square of Revolution, I saw the first electric moving sign. It was a flashing sign urging the members to pay their cooperative dues so as not to have trouble and red tape on having their cards renewed. One thing missing in Russia is advertisements. They have none. There are no goods and the Soviets say people should not be urged to buy. My guide always stresses that she has what is necessary and that seems to content them all. The ideal

of plenty tomorrow or the next day and for all is told completely to the whole city population.

At lunch I met an interesting man, a friend of Sherwood Eddy, who published a book on Russia last year. His name is J.F. Hecker, an American who has become a Russian citizen. † He was and still retains his position as a Methodist clergyman in New York. We were discussing crime and punishment. In Russia there is no fixed criminal code. If you are a murderer, you may be put in jail or you may be shot. It will depend on your character and ability. The more intellectual you are, the more you sin and the greater your punishment. He said it all goes back to your philosophy. If you believe in the eternal value of the human soul, you will have a different set of values. I asked, "Don't they believe in the soul in Russia?" Quick as a flash he came back, "No, they believe in the state or society and anything that is a sore spot must be ruthlessly cut away."

Last December there was great shortness of small silver coins. Independent traders and others scenting a profit commenced to hoard it. When they bought something for 10 kopecks, paid a ruble and got 90 kopecks change, they kept it. The government issued manifestos urging the people not to do this but the shortage continued. Finally the police arrested two men who were found to have one or two hundred rubles in change. They were shot. But there is no law against having this amount of change and no punishment set out. Hoarding was against the public interest. Public interest is paramount and hoarding ceased. And so the criminal law is flexible and changes from day to day with public sentiment as to what is good for and what is bad for the state.

I asked him what crystallized public opinion and he said the newspapers, which perform quite a different function than they do with us. Here they are not so much means of news. They are not supported by advertisements. They represent various groups, trades, factories. Even the Intourist Guides have their paper and in these papers the offers of the day. Suggestions, policies, etc., are printed. Criticisms of men and methods are encouraged and so what is good for society gradually crystallizes and the penal code accommodates itself.

†- Hecker's book was *The Challenge of Russia*. (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1931.)

After the revolution they abolished all lawyers but found they could not do without them. So now they have lawyers paid by the state to help the people and not to exploit them. Of course, as there is now no private property other than clothes, books, etc., there is not the need.

Hecker showed me his bank pass book, his wages are not paid to him but credited in his book. When he gets his bill for rent, gas, light, etc., it is sent in form of a check against his bank. He signs it, puts it in the post without a stamp, and his bill is paid. If he wants money, he has to go to the bank and get it. On his balance he gets 8% interest. This is printed in the back of his book. I don't understand their mentality at all. On the one hand, no private property — on the other, wage earners are urged to leave their money in deposit at 8%.

Things are still scarce. I went to four stores trying to buy paper and envelopes. I could get none and can get none in the hotel. We took a droshky to see Poll of the Lumber Export. It cost 4 rubles to go less than a mile. Taxis are government owned. I had one yesterday for a drive — it ran over \$7.50 per hour — and such a taxi! The ride was an adventure. And speaking of prices, Pierce is paying \$23.00 a day for 2 rooms at the Metropole and they won't take rubles. He has a contract made some time ago with the government and has 10,000 rubles on deposit and he can't use them to pay his bill. Foreigners in Russia can only buy things with foreign money. If you have rubles, you must show your certificate to say you have changed money. As you buy the amount is endorsed on the back.

One day three years ago, Pierce woke up to find that all the Russians who had been working with his men had been arrested, including his personal interpreter. There were charges of graft. Pierce was much worried as he naturally thought his firm would be blamed. He went higher up and higher up and could get no satisfaction. He was finally told to see a man in charge of the OGPU. He told this man he had be sent to him as he was the most powerful man. "So," said the OGPU man, "you think so? Well, the man in my position in Ukraine was sent last month to Siberia at a moment's notice." And Pierce got no satisfaction other than this: "We have a saying in Russia that any man who is not in jail must be innocent." Ten of the Russians were shot. One of them had only been to one

meeting and had no further dealings with the matter. There had been graft of some kind. There is no graft in Russia today. Fear rules.

I went in the Kremlin this morning. In our group was Mrs. Otto Kahn, Miss Wybert, and party. They were travelling through Russia in a private car with a chef and everything. They asked me to tea and I have just returned. They are at the Savoy with a retinue of servants. There is not much to say of the Kremlin except that in one of the buildings is the Central Committee. Stalin lives there and Lenin did. I was astonished to find the oldest building, a tiny church, dating from the 13th Century. The background of Russia is at least 500 years older than ours. Does that account for anything? Or will a fresh, impressionable younger people, tried in the fire of revolution, produce something finer than the world has yet seen?

I just returned from a movie in the suburbs. A slogan posted to the right of the street declared "Imperialists should remember that to attack is not to win!" and to the left "Down with capitalist wage slavery, long live Soviet free labor!" Then the news film ran, featuring unemployment in America. Returning to the hotel I found Rhys Williams. He is going out tomorrow, but we had a talk. He admits he prophesied the peasants could not be collectivized, but feels now he is mistaken. He has been in the country and the peasants say, "Just give us 3 years and we will show you."

I also met Mr. Smith, representative of General Motors, who used to work on the tug *Wander* out of Seattle, for the Puget Sound Tug Boat Company.

It is peculiar that the one crime of which the Russians have been particularly accused — free love — seems nonexistent. There are practically no street walkers; at the same time, if a woman goes with a man it is her business and no notice is taken. But she does not go with him commercially, she goes because she wants to. But this is not keeping down population, as this is increasing by 3 million a year. Williams puts this attitude to sex to (1) the food they eat is not concentrated; (2) the absolute absence of pornographic literature in magazine or other form and the absence of Hollywood and other films featuring love; (3) no Puritan repression which often results in making the forbidden fruit attractive; (4) the large interest young people are taking in social and political work and their universally intense interest in the working out of the

Great Russian Experiment.

May 10, 1931. Moscow.

I left the hotel via taxi for a visit to an auto factory (Trucks, the *Ams*). I saw the technical school attached and the factory which employs 13,000 men, now turning out 400 trucks a month. The plant is being reconstructed, new machines are everywhere. By June they said they would turn out 100 every 7 hour shift.

In the afternoon I went to the Boyer House, built by the first of the Romanovs and now kept as a museum.

Had lunch with Rhys Williams, his secretary, and Mr. and Mrs. Erskine.

The Soviet does make concessions to human nature. They need money and so they issue 8% 5 year bonds attached to which is a coupon for a drawing of prizes for 100 to 10,000 rubles. Miss Klaine _____ had been to the savings bank today and saw great excitement as a man came to claim a 10,000 ruble prize. Presumably he will have a great time with it, but it will not be a wild debauch — that is not done. I am much impressed with the morality of the Russian. I think the present movement can in a way be compared to a great religious revival. The whole attitude towards life and the sense of value has been changed. It is peculiar that the outside world should have seized on their marriage laws, so-called free love, and built up a legend of immorality — which is quite a false picture.

Met Mrs. Kincord, an American Communist living here and making a living teaching English. Although enthusiastically Red she does not hide facts. She is living as a Russian. She has two sons here and for a time all they could get was one room and a bathroom shared by 3 families. The living question is a hard one — families occupy one and two rooms and the difficulty of getting food is great. They have to go to the store early and line up. If they don't, the things they require are sold out. They may want meat and can only get some herring. In fact they must take what they can get.

It is very easy to get a wrong idea of prices for they soak the foreigner and disenfranchised, but the worker and member of the co-op get better treatment.

I have mentioned the price of canned fruit, 4.50 rubles per tin. I find the Russian can get one tin per person per month for 1.20 r. (60 cents). If he wants more he pays full price. The attitude of the Intellectual to the movement is interesting. My guide said the worker had a much larger allowance of food than she had.

"But" I said, "you are a worker. You walk around all day with us through museums, shops, and factories. You have no 7 hour day, you work hard."

She smiled and said, "Oh, but I don't really work hard. They do physical work and must have more."

I don't think the remark was window dressing. She was sincere.

A man, an intellectual, told me he wanted to move into a new worker's apartment, but frankly said he could not as workers had preference. When I expressed surprise he said it was quite right. He was better off than the worker, who was perhaps living in slum conditions. It was more necessary that the worker should have his surroundings changed than his for the worker was worse off. His turn would come later. He had a 9 year old daughter and he can't get her to school. Again, he defended the Soviet—and he was logical: "Suppose there are 300 children and only schools for 200? Who shall go? Why, the children of the workers, for if they don't go they will get no education. The children of the intellectual can be taught by the parents but if the worker's child does not go to school it will get no education. My wife and I," he said, "are quite capable of educating our child and we are doing it."

A girl of education, formerly wealthy, speaking 5 languages, capable of filling many positions, a writer, said that Communism had given her a new view of life. Had it not been for the movement she would just have been a flapper like other European girls, but now she was part of a great movement, doing things, and happier. The same girl said in speaking of the members of the Party who did not know languages, art, and literature could teach her many things. She always felt that no matter how ignorant they were of many of the things she knew, that when it came to communism they could always teach her a lot. And only 3 years ago she was in jail for speaking English to a foreign correspondent in the streets of Leningrad. This is all hard to write down, but as she told it with

the enthusiastic ring of truth in her voice you felt you could not but believe every word she said (Mrs. Dietrics).

It is an extraordinary thing that the government is restoring and repairing so many old churches. They are cleaning off the added paint and bringing out the old original frescoes. There is an old church near Kiev that is perishing by being exposed to the weather. It is supposed to be Vladimir's church. They are talking of enclosing it all under glass to keep it from further disintegration.

On our way to the factory this morning we went to church — for today is Sunday. I was surprised to see a very young priest with a gorgeous bass voice intoning the service with two acolytes, very young, holding the candles. There was a large congregation but almost all were elderly peasant-like people with sad faces looking for comfort.

I called on Pierce and met Duranty of the *New York Times* and a Dane who is a manufacturer here. The talk was mostly of business. Pierce is submitting a report on the coal situation to the Central Committee and Duranty was writing a report on it to New York. The interesting thing was that a report had just come in from the country of several Russians being removed because they would not follow the advice of the "American specialists," as they were called.

May 11, 1931. Moscow.

We set out and saw a Divorce/Marriage Court, a simple room. There is one in every district. There were 4 desks, behind each sat a woman — one for marriages, one for deaths, one for divorces, one for births. The marriage desk was empty, the clerk away at lunch, and two young Russians came in — almost a boy and girl. They did not wait, they just mentioned they were going out for a walk and said they would be back. The marriage consists of filling out a form saying where they work and the wages they get. They also both have to have a medical certificate saying they are fit to marry. The marriage is endorsed in the passport and away they go. Fee: 2 rubles. Divorce if there are no children is even simpler; the man or wife can appear, state their reasons, and the marriage is annulled. The other party is notified. No alimony or defense required. Fee: 2 rubles. While we were there a man

came in and went out in a few minutes — free. If there are children, they both must appear and talk it over. They decide which will look after the children and agree on payment. Approximately 1/3 of the wages of the one not taking the children has to be paid.

From there we went to a home for former prostitutes — a really wonderful place with a real atmosphere of reformation. The girls come voluntarily. Agents are sent out to tell the girls of the homes (there are 5 or 6) and the girls are asked to come. They are examined for disease and if infected are treated elsewhere until they are cured. When admitted they go to work in the stocking factory which is attached to the home and which we also saw. They were just an ordinary lot of girls, but some were smoking while at work. They are paid 50 to 100 rubles per month, work 7 hours a day, and have every 5th day free. If they cannot read or write they must attend classes in the evening. If they can read and if they behave, they can go out, even alone, in the evenings — but they must be in by 11:00 o'clock. If the manager has doubts, they may not go out alone, but must go in a group. After a year or so they are sent out and given work in a factory. It is no disgrace in Russia to have been a fallen woman; no stigma is attached to a home of this kind or to jail — or "Houses of Correction," as they are always called. Many girls had photos, perfume, etc., on their tables. The dining room, as always, had a stage and a grand piano. I was much impressed with this work.... They are by these means stamping out professional prostitution, which they say is 99% economic and 1% inherited.

We then went to a peasants' club house, which is really a training school for leaders of collective farms and a place for peasants on business in the city to stay.

In the afternoon we went to a jail. It was a pre-war building with deep cells, cement floors, and all the usual accompaniments. But what a difference. First of all we saw the factory where textiles are made. No one was working for it was the day off. Except for the fact that the men are not free to go out, they live exactly as if they were free, with four days work, one day rest, and wages paid ranging from 50 to 100 rubles per month. There is no uniform, each man has his clothes and takes anything into prison he likes. The man in one cell I saw had on a good wrist watch and was well dressed. They had a barber's shop with the

barber a prisoner. Price of a shave: 10 kopecks. There was also a store where sweets, cigarettes, canned goods, and clothes could be bought. The storekeeper was also a prisoner. They had a radio station and a radio in every cell — again, the operator, a prisoner. There were classrooms for the prisoners and a large auditorium where they have concerts and plays. The cells are open from 6:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night and during that time the prisoners have the keys and can lock it up if they want to go for a walk on the grounds, which are surrounded by a high wall. The most extraordinary thing is that there was in the prison just one militia man. True, there were plenty of uniformed men, but they were prisoners, appointed by the management. This is quite a new departure in prison welfare. When the term is up the prisoner is found a job and no stigma attached to him.

They do have Houses of Correction run on a different line for incorrigibles, of which there must be some. But the majority of men fall in line. No one is forced to work, but if one does and insists on it he is refused admittance to any social life and generally comes around. There was a healthy atmosphere and no feeling on our part that they objected to our coming to see them. In fact, everywhere we go we feel they are glad to see us and are proud of their institutions. The whole nation seems just like a kid with a new toy, in fact.

Tonight we saw *Boris Godunov*, a wonderfully staged opera which began at 7:30 and ended at 12:30. Russians run to bass voices. "Raison" was Boris and the death scene was wonderful. An Englishman, Coates, was leader and received an enthusiastic reception.

May 12, 1931. Moscow.

I am just pulling out of Moscow station for Kiev on the most crowded train I have ever seen. I am afraid the road is too rough for writing. Before telling about my train journey I must speak about my last day in Moscow.

In the morning I went to see one of the People's Courts — a simple room, benches for the people, a table with 4 chairs at which sit the judge and his 2 assistants. At the end of the table sits the secretary, who takes notes in longhand. The judge unceremoni-

ously wore his ordinary, shabby clothes, a flannel collar. He had a good face and a fine eye. One assistant was a little hunchback and the other a girl of about 21. The case regarded a false hotel — in other words, a hotel which was supposed to be a cooperative, but was actually owned by the directors. The judge carried on a conversation with the witness and asked him many questions about accounts. Did he have extra food? Did he subscribe to the last internal loan? And so on. It is all very informal. When the judge had finished, he asked his assistants if they had any questions. They asked a few. Then he called in the public to ask them if any of them would like to ask questions. A few did. We did not wait for the end but went to another room where another case was beginning. The setting was the same, but one of the assistant judges was a woman with a Madonna-like face wearing a shawl around her head. All the judges and assistants are of the people and strange as it may seem the whole atmosphere even when one of the judges lights one of the inevitable Russian cigarettes...is charged with a simple dignity which is impressive. The prisoner walks in unguarded. There are no uniforms in the room, nor anywhere in sight. But the court is the only place in Russia I have seen where all the men take off their hats.

There are no "Oye, Oye, Oyes." The defendant is charged — he breaks into vociferous sobs. The judge kindly waits a moment, then makes him sit down. The defendant pulls himself together and rises again but the judge beckons him to remain seated among the public and asks him questions. It seems his wife has been found badly beaten and had accused her husband. He pleaded guilty but said he was a good workman. His wife and mother-in-law drank heavily and he also, as a result of environment, commenced to drink. One night coming home, he found his wife with another man and became enraged, beating her with a brick — and so she was found.

"Why didn't you divorce her and commence a new life?" asked the judge.

At this point, another flood of tears.

As time was fleeting, we left — with an added respect for the Soviet regime. The courts seemed so kindly and full of common-sense and that good old English term — equity. The judges are not lawyers nor are they trained in law. I had with me Erskine, a

lawyer from San Francisco. I would have liked to get the opinion of a good Vancouver lawyer friend. Of course, the Soviet does not encourage lawyers.

We then went to the Museum of the Revolution, which begins with the first peasant revolt in the 17th Century, continuing through the 18th and the aristocratic revolt in 1825 and on up to the present — illustrated with pictures, relics, and photos. The museum was full of people, in groups mostly, being lectured to. One can only leave feeling — even if prejudiced—that the 1917 revolution was only a natural evolution from what went before. It is a powerful impression if one is young and impressionable, as most visitors are.

From there we went to the Lenin Museum, where the life of Lenin is impressively told, ending with a duplicate of his study in the Kremlin and the wreaths and presents received from workers all over Russia.

If my guide is typical of the present generation of Russians, they have very little sense of humor — and how can they have? If ever a country was living seriously, it is Russia. No amusement. No dancing. No hiking (as in Germany). No card playing. No games. The cinema, yes, but all films are definitely propaganda. The opera, yes, in the old style, and the ballet — always full but very expensive and only a fraction of the population can go. Our seats to *Boris Godunov* cost 9 rubles with no reduction — that is, workers and disenfranchised all paid the same rate.

When in the Lenin Museum they showed how Lenin was sheltered in London and issued his first paper from there, I smilingly said, “Well, there is one free country left.”

Strict silence.

“Well,” said I, “at least you should thank England for sheltering him.”

“I wouldn’t thank you at all,” said she.

May 13, 1931. Kiev.

I arrived here at 4:30, having left Moscow at 6:42 last evening. It took 22 hours to cover 800 kilometers — a leisurely, quiet trip. The sleeping cars are very comfortable, and the train goes so slowly you can sleep in peace. I slept 11 hours last night, surely a record and a mark in favor of slow trains. It was all so amusing.

At Moscow I was rather disturbed to find that a very attractive (and there aren’t very many) Russian woman with her little 4 year old boy were quartered in my compartment. Her husband was very affectionately seeing her off and her multitudinous parcels were everywhere. I had the lower berth and she the upper. My guide warned me not to give up the lower berth (cold blooded again) but when friend husband in a mixture of German and French besought me to let her have the lower, of course I weakened. Also in broken French and German, I suggested she might change and let me have a man bedfellow. After pulling out I was relieved to find this was done and she replaced with a young Russian. So I had my lower after all. Said young Russian and I got along famously and it was great fun getting to understand each other.

If Russia is starving, there are food profiteers here yet. This is what he brought for two meals on the train: cold chicken, smoked halibut, caviar, six hard-boiled eggs, chocolate, dried apricots, bread, and butter. He was most generous and wanted me to share everything. So I took a piece of raw smoked halibut and said I would love it for breakfast. At breakfast I found the hotel had given me raw smoked ham, so after trying that I was ready for raw smoked halibut. It wasn’t bad. Then we went on to caviar. We began to talk by signs and odd German words and to drink tea. By the time we got to Kiev, we had to pay for 30 glasses of tea between us. We fairly swam in tea and, strange to say, I liked it. I wonder if I shall ever like cream in tea again. I expect so.

He was a clerk in a co-op store making 225 rubles a month. His wife lives in Kiev, making 150 rubles a month. I got the following figures from him which I have checked since getting here and found to be approximately correct at the moment, although they may be changed at any time according to the scarcity of abundance of supplies:

Shoes: 10 rubles, allowance 4 pairs per year. Other price: 22 rubles.

The are of poor quality and won’t last 3 months.

Suit: 37 rubles, allowance 2 per year. Other price: 80 rubles.

He was wearing a suit that no self-respecting Canadian would ever wear for a train journey and it was only two months old.

Shirt: 3.84 rubles, allowance 12 per year. Other

price: 7 rubles.

It was of poor flannel.

Tea: 4.80 rubles per kilo, allowance 1/8 kilo per month. Other price: 70 rubles per kilo.

Bread: 35 kopeks per kilo, allowance 1 kilo per day. Other price: 1.40 rubles per kilo.

Eggs: 72 kopeks per 10 eggs, allowance 10 per week. Other price: 3 rubles per 10 eggs.

Butter: 1.84 rubles per 400 grams, allowance 400 grams per month. Other price: 8 rubles per 400 grams.

Meat: 92 kopeks per kilo, allowance 400 grams per day. Other price: 2.50 rubles per 400 grams.

Sugar: 78 kopeks per kilo, allowance 1 kilo per month. Other price 5 rubles per kilo.

The first prices above are in cooperative stores, to which one must pay to belong. The last column are the prices in government stores in which anyone can shop, including the disenfranchised, property owners, droshky drivers, and Russians who have already used up their ration.

My Russian friend was a jovial character and only objected when I wanted to take his photo, then he left the apartment.

Kiev is different, but the same propaganda exists.

I have not seen those wonderful Russian movies of which one hears. Again tonight it was propaganda — and the technique was not so good. The Demon Rum and its effect on work was the subject. The theater was empty. I said to my guide going out that the movie was not very amusing. She sighed and said, “practically all our movies are propaganda. It gets very tiresome. But we can’t help it. It must be so until the Five Year Plan is complete.”

Kiev is further south. The atmosphere is lighter. A band was playing.

“Ah,” said I, “is that a park?”

“No,” said she, “that is at an industrial exhibition. You must not come to Russia for amusement.”

When I spoke of getting back to Vienna and going touring through Italy, she gasped and said, “how wonderful!”

What a contrast to the Leningrad guide, who I know despised me as a bloated bloodsucking capitalist with no redeeming features. Apparently they are more human here. After all, this is not Russia, this is Ukraine.

At dinner tonight I sent the orchestra a glass of wine apiece. They all came to my table and drank. It was an occasion. They smiled and went back to play Russian music with renewed zest. Yes, I feel I am leaving the tense atmosphere of Leningrad and Moscow.

May 14, 1931. Kiev.

Yes, there are more smiles in Kiev. Climate does affect behavior and disposition.

The Dniepr is in full flood and as we saw it from the monastery it looked like a sea. As there were many bridges it was impossible to photograph it, bridges being one of the things you cannot photograph.

The view of the monastery as you suddenly come on it and look through the gateway is startling. It is so fine with its golden roofs and mosque-like towers and it is so well kept. Monks were here until last year, when 13 were still left from the 1200 who used to be in residence. The head of the 13 fell into disgrace last year by killing his old mistress, as he wanted a new one. And the new one helped him do it. He confessed and is in jail or House of Correction. The churches and monastery and catacombs are now a museum.

In the catacomb the coffins formerly the object of adoration to 100,000 pilgrims are sealed up with Soviet seals and the seals of priests. After a while they will be opened before witnesses to prove that the whole thing was a fake and that the holy men supposed to have suffered no corruption are simply ordinary skeletons. The whole foundation of the fame of Kiev rests in the finding of bodies which have been dead for several hundred years in a good state of preservation. This, say the Soviets, was due to the character of the ground. The church said the bodies did not suffer corruption because of their holy lives. I suspect the Soviet is right. I do not doubt that the opening of the coffins will be made a great occasion.

How they do rake up the bad about the past. I am told that Vladimir, now a canonized saint for introducing Christianity into Russia from Byzantium, did it for political reasons — to help business. And besides he was a really bad old man and had 300 wives, any of whom could be purchased for a consideration. Stout fellow.

This afternoon just walked the streets and talked to my guide Miss Bertha. At least I have got a really

intelligent guide whose conversation is a treat — I've been arguing our system against theirs all day and as she has a sense of humor it has been very good fun. She is very sincere; very well read, contented, and assured of the success of collectivism. She is only 21 years old and quite good looking, somewhat of a Jewish type. I have hesitated to ask her right out if she is a Jew. She has a sympathy for the fleshpots and admits they are missing a lot but feels better times will come and with ecstasy said how lucky she was to be living in such interesting times. That is what buoys up everyone: the thought that they are creating, are in at the birth of a new age. It is a great tonic. I went to the opera tonight — the Barber of Sevilla — and was much impressed with the clothes and the look of the people. They were very much better dressed and better looking than in Moscow or Leningrad. One does not often remember that the Ukraine is a different nation speaking another language. The Ukrainian is slower and more easy going and fonder of laughter.

I find the professor in Russia seems to have come into his own at least financially and for a time. They are short of them as there has been such a great increase in students. The best of them get 18 rubles an hour, assistants 8 rubles, and teachers 4 to 5 rubles. This is excused on account of the pressing and immediate need of engineers and it is the professors in the various branches that are so well paid. Many of them and the best of them are left over from the old regime. They are allowed full privileges and buy from the co-operatives. The students here go to the opera at 70% off, workers at 35% off. The best seats are 4 rubles.

May 15, 1931. Kiev.

It was a bright, sunny day. I walked first thing to a clinic for pregnant women and children under 4, combined with which is a kindergarten for children under 4 in which 80 children live and a day nursery which looks after children up to 4 years of age. There is also a department where lectures on birth control and venereal diseases are given. There is no hesitation about speaking of such things and doctors everywhere give advice and treatment to the workers for free. It seemed odd to be taken to such a place by my guide, just a young girl, but sex in Russia is robbed of much of its illicit appeal by the openness with which they

deal with it.

I was in a Museum of Religion yesterday where the old and new religions from Buddha down were dealt with by pictures and exhibits. I saw a peculiar picture of a naked man with an explanation under it in Russian. There seemed to be no point to the picture and quite innocently I asked what it meant. My guide read it and quite calmly said, "That is a sect that believed in cutting off their, I don't know what you call it, but it is their sexual organ. We used to have many of them in Russia. They thought they could only be holy if they had that operation."

Well, we were taken around the clinic, kindergarten, and day nursery by the superintendent. She was a worker and not a doctor but evidently a kind, motherly soul with a great keenness in her work. How that word "worker" is used in Russia to describe the very aristocracy — all others are employees. The institution is only 1 of 17 in Kiev. Of course they can only look after a fraction of the population and the children of workers and homeless children are taken in first. No child of an intellectual or an employee would have a chance but the ideal is to take all children in as soon as funds allow. The facility is extravagantly run, with thirteen nurses, a permanent doctor, an assistant, and women to clean and wash up and cook. If one adds up all the employees together, each one looks after three children.... The cost of each child is 65 rubles per month. The rooms were airy and clean. The children divided into little groups of from 3 to 5 for their meals. Their clothes were well looked-after, each child was provided with a little locker with his soap and towel and toothbrush. And of course there was the inevitable wall newspaper written by the mothers. Besides this they had a pictorial wall paper which in Kindergarten language told the children about The Red Army, The Soviet, The Factory. What a bulwark of strength they are building up for themselves in the coming generation.

From there we went to St. Sophia, the oldest church in Kiev — but churches mean so little in this new life.

There are so many beggars about. One decent clean old man on crutches haunts me. I asked my guide if there were no old men's homes, no places for cripples and the sordid poor. "No," she said, "we can't do everything. They are of the older generation and really

don't matter. They will soon be all gone. We must look after the worker and the new generation." They are working on an old age pension, but it is not ready yet. Will the aristocracy, the worker, become more and more arrogant as time goes on or will they work it out???

Our next visit was by street car, to a moving picture factory. One the way we saw a company of girls with full size rifles marching through the street. It appears girls and boys of high school age both get the same military training. As it was explained, in the last war the girls couldn't do their share so now they are being trained — "for we never expect to fight any other than a defensive war and the girls must help." I wonder...

The Red Army is the darling of the Russian. The only smart thing one sees on the street is the Red Army officer. Not all of them, for it is not yet the thing to be smart — but wait a few years. The uniform itself is smart and the younger men wear it smartly. The privates do not, but that will come. No one knows or if they do they won't tell how many men they have in the army, but as every man has to serve a year and then becomes a reservist, the imagination is staggered at the numbers they could put in the field. And what a different spirit from the old army they would have. The Red Army is the greatest force for converting the peasant. The young man goes back to the village after his year in the army as a missionary full of enthusiasm for the coming golden age the commune is to bring about.

The moving picture plant was very big, full of machines turning out 100 films a year. Adjoining it is being erected another factory for the manufacture of photographic apparatus. At present they import the film but they are preparing to manufacture that.

I got on board the train for Odessa at 6:30 in the evening.

May 16, 1931. Odessa.

I arrived here in a drizzle of rain after another very comfortable night. The train was not crowded so I had a compartment to myself. I don't know where the dirt comes from. The windows were closed but in the morning everything was covered with a fine dust which sifts in. I have found this on all trains. All means

of transportation are very crowded — not including sleeping cars, which are too dear. The stations are a sight with people patiently waiting for a crowded ride, perhaps on the steps. Street cars are just the same. Coming back from the moving picture plant yesterday we had to walk as every car that went by was literally crowded to the steps. This is only one of the many little inconveniences which make up Russian life.

I have a boy guide here, he is 19 years old, and shabbily dressed. He proudly told me that he is a worker, a carpenter, and for three years he worked as an apprentice at his trade, earning 50 rubles a month. In the meantime he studied English at night. He finished his carpentering apprenticeship, became a carpenter, and got 125 rubles a month. He found it difficult to continue his studies and to work also, so now he is going to the university to become an engineer and the government pays him the same wages he would otherwise get as a worker, namely 125 rubles. This sounds fantastic but one must not forget that when he is an engineer he is at the call of the state to go where they need him. He is bright and his English is good. He has a complete knowledge of the structure of the political life of Russia, as all students must have. To become anything in Russia educationally, one *must* qualify in political economy. This morning I was overwhelmed with Dialectican Marxism, etc., which I confess I did not understand. His enthusiasm for what the Soviet has meant to *him* is electric. He is enthusiastic in describing the close sympathy there now is between the worker and the peasant, the worker and the Red Army.

Last week the peasants called for help in planting potatoes as the spring was late and planting had to be done at once so he with a "brigade" (everything here is described in army terms, in fact all life is a fight) of students went out to plant for three days, after which another brigade of students replaced them. The students are sent out to lecture to the workers at dinner in the factories. In all factories practically every day students go out to speak. Last week my guide went to speak on the necessity of learning foreign languages. "Oh," said he, "there is something new and interesting every day." Would a Harvard or Yale or Oxford or Cambridge or McGill student say the same?

The price figures I have given elsewhere are not universal. Until a year ago Odessa was looked after by

the Central Committee. They were told from now on to look after themselves and they are developing their own supplies. Meat, for instance, is very scarce here — they get it when they can. In Kiev at a cooperative yesterday I took down the following prices from a price list posted in the store:

Coffee, ground.	1.50 r. per 100 grams
Coffee, N.R.	1.20 r. per 100 grams
Wheat grits	36 k. per kilo
Sugar, lump	70 k. per kilo
Sugar, granulated	58 k. per kilo
Salt, fine	5 k. per kilo

This after noon I went for a drive with my guide, who I have I have learned is a Komsomol (young communist). He pointed out the cellar in which he was born and with much pride also later on pointed out the apartment in which he now lived and in so many words said “Isn’t communism good?” Again he stressed the need of self-denial and suffering in order that machinery might be bought abroad. When I told him they were building on the trains of capitalism, he asked why not. I urged him to try and go abroad to see conditions for himself. But 19 years old, enthusiastic, what can he see but a new world, a Socialist State, Utopia...

May 16, 1931. Odessa.

I am still in Russia. I am in a comfortable room looking over the lights of a large dock with many Soviet steamers tied up and taking in cargo. To the right is a large elevator which is taking on grain. I leave tomorrow evening, this is the last chance I shall have in Russia of writing down my impressions.

First. Living conditions are as bad as the world believes them to be. Crowded tenements. Food is scarce, but there is no famine and no danger of it, for the scarcity is voluntary and artificially caused by the desire to create credits abroad for machinery.

Second. With regards to education and propaganda, they are skillfully tending every effort to bring up the new generation on the tenets of communism. The Red Army, deified as it is, is the cement binding the new peasant with the new proletariat. The museums, palaces of the old regime, and cinemas are all being used to show the rigors of the old time and the

glorious future that lies ahead if they will only be steadfast.

Third. They are systematically planning their future. When the Five Year Plan was announced, a new era in world economics commenced. The second Five Year Plan with regard to agriculture is already announced. Soon the second Five Year Plan with regard to industry will be put out and by that time the Five Year Plan will become an ordinary occurrence.

Fourth. Regarding amusements: we have here a nation so seriously wounded that it is making its business its only amusement — and its business is communism. Can human nature want this for more than a generation?

Fifth. While clothed in much verbiage, the present Russian ideal is entirely material. They deny the existence of a soul and defy material progress expressed in more things for the people. When they reach their goals in twenty years, their living standard will then only approximate our general standard. What then?

Sixth. They say there can be no compromise with the capitalistic system. They do not want to fight but the very nature of the two systems must lead to a fight. To the Communist there is no such thing as compromise.

Seventh. The greatest thing they have done is to create a new incentive to work: to serve The State and not self-interest. So far they have succeeded. If they finally are able to maintain this ideal and if human selfishness does not overtake them, they will be a dominating force for real good in the world, even if their system does not become worldwide.

What should be our attitude in Canada?

First. To boldly recognize that our system has produced a higher standard of living and a greater mental development expressed in terms of invention, scientific research, and human kindness than any other.

Second. To recognize that the Russian experiment simply came as the result of some strong men taking advantage of the conditions created by the Great War — by the senility and degeneration of the old Russian regime and by the servile character of the majority of the old Russian population, which was dominated formerly by the Tsarist government and now by an autocratic Communist minority.

Third. To recognize and profit by what is good

in the present Russian regime:

a) In educating our children in the history of our progress and how it all came about, stressing political economy and teaching them that the precious legacy they have received can only be maintained by constant vigilance on their part — in other words, right propaganda.

b) By educating the young to realize what the country does for them and by demanding in return a corresponding service from them. Taking a leaf from the Russian book, we should demand from every college student who has received a practically free college education a return commensurate with that education. No college student educated in Canada should be free to go to the States or elsewhere simply because wages or emoluments are higher.

c) Our government must budget not for 1 year but for 5 or 10. They must plan so that public works shall be carried out in times of economic stress and not in times of prosperity. They should not follow public sentiment as they do now, they should lead.

Fourth. There must be a greater social consciousness on the part of our successful men. They, like the college man who has received an education, must realize that wealth was not given them to use selfishly. They must not fight every new tax for social service. They must more and more recognize that they are only trustees and now owners.

Fifth. The government — that is, *we* — must see that every citizen has subsistence and that in return he performs a service for it. With all our wealth in food and clothes and minerals and building material, surely we can afford to keep our people properly. In return, we should demand from them a return in services which while not perhaps necessary still will add to the amenities and conveniences of our complicated modern life.

Sixth. In business relations our government must recognize that a new factor has arisen: a country which sells regardless of cost. While such competition exists we must take means to fight it. No single industry in Canada can fight the Russian Government. Means must be found to keep our salmon industry, our lumber industry, and our wheat industry alive. We cannot allow these industries to be killed off one by one, leaving Russia monarch of all she surveys. This is a national question and will never be settled by the puerile

method of refusing to recognize Russia and refusing to do business with her.

In summing up, I know of no truer saying than “By their fruits you shall know them.” Using this yardstick I am content that our system is the best.

May 17, 1931. Odessa.

I drove this morning to a collective farm and what a difference from the poor peasant one sees everywhere from the railway train. It was a vegetable and fruit farm with the market of Odessa very near. The old buildings are still used but have been cleaned up. There are 1200 people and 1500 acres of land, all divided into various groups. We were taken round by the manager, a young man 21 years of age, a poor peasant formerly. He was smart and capable. It seemed odd to see in the office a typewriter with a girl smoking a cigarette as she typed away. One section of the farm is run by 200 Jews who were formerly independent traders in Odessa. They were given teachers and settled on an estate formerly owned by two private people. As the manager said, this place formerly maintained two people; now 200 are kept by it.

The question of the market is settled in consultation with the co-ops, who take all the produce. They pay for new potatoes 100.00 r. per English ton (2000), but for the fall crop 30.00 r. per ton. For tomatoes 50.00 r. per ton. The price for cherries and apricots and cucumbers is not yet fixed. There is a law in Russia that within 10 miles or so of the towns no grain shall be grown but rather the land shall be given to fruit and vegetables.

They did not fail to give me a dig about how much better off the Jews were who had gone on the land in Russia rather than those who had gone to Palestine, where the English were treating them so badly.

Competition in service is encouraged and the Ukrainian section proudly showed me the flag sent to them from Moscow for going over the top in their quota and making the best showing in the community. The Jews came next. The manager and six other members of the community were members of the Odessa town council. It was a fine day. The roads were bad. But a feeling of self-respect and optimism pervaded the atmosphere.

On the way we drove for 2 or 3 miles past army

barracks and parade grounds where the Red Army was having a summer camp. We saw many parties out practising map drawing. They seem a very formidable force: defenders of a righteous cause and each with a commander's baton in his knapsack.

We then went to a bath house on the sea, beautifully situated, where workers, peasants, and employees get electrical treatment free. It was full of patients. On the beach many were bathing and many others fishing. It was the spot most like home that I have seen in Russia. In fact Odessa with its promenade, its wharves, its sunshine, is different and I am very glad to have seen it.

I forgot to mention the children's home at the farm. All of the women are working now and the children — some 50 of them — are in a house formerly belonging to the owner of the land. It was clean and attractive. The garden was neat. The children were out playing and as we went by the manager called them. The little tots, about 4 years old, stood up, held up their right hand and replied, "Always ready." That's the time to teach them. They have trained nurses and a doctor, in all one employee for 2-1/2 children.

I am sure Russians don't work hard — 7 hours and every 5th day off. But the keenest Communists are those who have come up in the world. My Odessa guide and the farm manager were good examples. They can not realize that in other countries opportunities for education and getting on in the world have been available for centuries. They think they have something new.

May 18, 1931. Pocholoschick, Poland.

I am sitting on the railway station having got this far on my way to Vienna. I am out of Russia, having gone through two of the most thorough customs examinations possible. Everything was taken out and discussed. The examination of tourists' baggages seems to denote the state of civilization: the further west, the more casual. I got down to the station in Odessa having been assured there would be what Russia calls a soft car with blankets, pillows, and sheets provided. Alas, on arrival I found the soft car was broken and nothing but one hard car, and that an open car, was available. It was crowded. There was much distress on the part of Intourist before finally they put

me in a Moscow car. It was a soft car, but without bed clothes. Instead, there was a note to the conductor to put me off between 2 and 3 in the morning and to take me to a soft car which would certainly be at my disposal. I did go to sleep, but with one eye open and woke at 12:30. The conductor came for me at 2:30 and 2:45 in the dark night and deposited me on a dark station platform, before suddenly realizing it was the wrong station. We scrambled back.

The right station did not show up until 4:00 o'clock. We were waiting with the conductor at my elbow. When we did arrive I was deposited with a porter who said the train came at 4:30. I can count in Russian. I had a glass of tea in the restaurant with my bags around me and at 4:30 along came the porter and wandering round put me on the above mentioned hard car which had been dropped off. It was full of sleeping men and women. I smiled, for if there is a helpless feeling, it is to be surrounded with humans and not to be able to speak at all. I sat there for an hour before we were shunted round and finally a new train was made up. The porter again came and transferred me to a soft car (for 4 people) but a woman was in one berth and a man on the other. So I ate a sandwich in the passage and saw the sun rise. Finally, at 6:00 o'clock I went in, climbed up to the berth over the woman and slept till 7:30.

At 10:00 o'clock we arrived at the Russian border, where we waited two hours before being shunted to Poland. Since the time zone in Poland is two hours earlier, it was still 10:00 o'clock and I now have to wait until 12:00 for the train to start. Truly when you get off the few main lines, railway travelling in Russia is an experience. Our colonist cars are better than their first class. But I am enjoying it.

I feel a new man here in Poland. Strange to say my self-respect has come back. A dirty little Jew money changer came. True he is a parasite. He couldn't live in Russia. He gave me a 5 zloti piece which an onlooker threw on the ground. At once the Jew put it in his pocket and gave me good money. He soaked me on the exchange but he did it quite openly so I bought him a beer. He talked a little English, having been in New York, and kept asking if he couldn't change some more money for me.

Nothing could be more different than the appearance of the country and peasants entering through

Riga and leaving through Odessa. We passed for miles along the biggest plowed fields I have ever seen. Communal farms, tractors, and an air of prosperity contrasted very strongly with the North. The peasants are better dressed, their houses neater.

Russian efficiency is a strange thing. Intourist carefully gave me a note to buy a ticket which they couldn't sell me from the Russian to the Polish border for 2.50 rubles. The porter was so troubled he went backwards and forwards and finally asked me for four rubles. Then he came back and said it was only 75 kopeks. I was asked to declare all my Russian money as export was forbidden. I had 5 rubles which cost me \$2.50. The customs said calmly to give it to the "Arbeiter," which I did. But they wouldn't change it at the border for good old LSD. But, after all, they are having their own row — they think the rest of the world is all against them so they take what and when they can. I must say they have the country well under control. But the salute the conductor gave me here was salve to my wounded spirit. I am now on the Polish train and I never knew red plush could look and

feel so nice...

It is a treat to be understood again. My traveller's German is getting better after two weeks rest. I am now in Lemberg and leave here at 7:10 for Vienna. There is no dining car, as usual. By the way, I saw no dining car in Russia. I believe there are none except for the Trans-Siberia. I don't think I want to take that trip.

After Russia it is interesting to pick out the bourgeoisie on the train and stations. They do look fat and satisfied. I never saw a fat man in Russia. I now realize how bourgeois I must have looked and how they realized I was a member of the hated class.

From the train Polish villages look neat and not poverty-stricken. The first thing I saw in Poland was two men painting a building. I never saw that in Russia. The contrast in the people is interesting. I wish I could describe it while the impression is fresh, but I am not a describer. I have just had ham and how good it tasted. I see oranges on sale. I never did see any fruit in Russia.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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