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Dear Unknown Friend

In this exchange of letters, American women and Soviet women tell of their families, their work, their special interests—and always of their deep desire for peace and friendship.

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Dear Unknown Friend

*TO ALL WOMEN WHO ARE WORKING
FOR PEACE THE WORLD OVER*

Committee of Women

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP

114 East 32nd Street, New York 16, N. Y.

1949

price: 15 cents

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Chairman, Correspondence Project

INTRODUCTION:

A History of the Correspondence Project

DURING the last year of the war, the Committee of Women of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship received a packet of letters written by women of varied interests and occupations in the Soviet Union to their "dear unknown sisters in the United States." Feeling very close to their allied sisters here, these Soviet women expressed a hope and desire that the women of these two great countries through mutual understanding and friendship could play a large part in the building of a lasting peace.

The Committee of Women was happy to be the instrument for implementing this great work on this side of the Atlantic.

With the cooperation of many individuals, women's clubs, church groups and organizations, this Correspondence Project came into being, has grown and is flourishing. Women from 29 of our states are now corresponding with Soviet women, who are similarly occupied.

With the thought that all American women would like to know about this effort for peace and friendship, we present in this little booklet a few of the many letters exchanged. All of the letters and excerpts contained, herein, are authentic and are reproduced from copies of the letters, the originals of which have been sent to the correspondents, together with the English translations of the Russian letters. American names are withheld because of the personal and intimate nature of the contents.

What this exchange of ideas means to these correspondents is typified by the following excerpt from an American woman living in a tiny town in the northernmost tip of the United States on Puget Sound, and others which will follow.

"Your letter is here before me on my dining room table. It is something of a miracle to see it there and realize that it has

come from across the world to establish a bond between two people so far removed in point of mileage.

“If all the little people all over the world could know each other, they would also discover that we are all fundamentally the same in our hopes and desires. The knowledge that you, too, traveled down the old Mississippi River with Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, have dreamed the same dreams, heard the same music and are building for the same freedoms that we struggle to attain and cherish, all these things tear away the miles and language differences. Antonina, my friend, I salute you.”

FOREWORD

WE THINK the time is approaching swiftly when women, as a social phenomenon will be obsolete. Some day we will be concerned with citizens—with *people* performing their own functions, motivated by a basic understanding of oneness.

These might seem obscure words to use in relation to this pamphlet which is solely about and by women. But we think, instead, it is a confirmation. For here are women, American and Soviet, speaking across 8,000 miles, talking about what? About recipes, child care . . . but saying more distinctly than words, "These things go to make up a whole. We, because we are women, leading lives of such infinite variety, are talking about the fabric of society, about the texture and color and substance and strength of a compound thing, our homes and our countries. We love children, and children will be our men and women. We love work, whether it is growing potatoes or designing a building, because unfolding creativeness speaks irresistibly of peace and not of war. We love our husbands and our friends and our homes because they speak of reciprocal joys, trust, expectation—and these are the only incontrovertible and unchanging facts in a world of shifting values. We love education and the brightness of new and strange things, because no being lives to himself, and to be denied the ranging freedoms of the mind and the imagination is to die."

These are women speaking, true enough, but they are speaking a language which instead of isolating them makes them spokesmen for the slow of speech, wherever he may be. The simplicity of their words and their hopes are what we like to dwell upon, for thus dark things become visible, and always, since time began, peacemakers have spoken in homely phrases, so that all might say Amen.

Let us not underestimate this little pamphlet. Wisdom is here. Let us learn of it and be wise.

COMMITTEE OF WOMEN

IOWA : U.S.S.R.

A farmer's wife writes

Iowa, U.S.A.
September, 1946

DEAR UNKNOWN FRIEND,

I am writing this letter in hopes that I am fortunate enough to have it reach someone interested in the life of a person here in the United States.

Right now my life is full and brimming over. My husband and I had a daughter born August 28th. Of course she takes lots of my time and I enjoy her so much.

I will try and tell you something of myself and hobbies. I am 26 years old and of German and English nationality. My husband was in service three years and it has just been the last year that he was discharged. Last March we moved on an 80-acre farm so you see there has never been a dull moment for a long time.

The state of Iowa is located in the Middle West and is very good farm land. We raised corn and oats this year; also lots of chickens and pigs. Summer is over and officially autumn is here, but today it was grand out—75 degrees.

My hobbies vary in many ways. I enjoy keeping house and I could spend all my time in the kitchen trying out new recipes. I am great on out-door sports and spend lots of time in the fresh air working in the yard and my flowers. Before I was married, I swam lots, ice-skated, played tennis and took long hikes often. I also just joined a new study club here in this community and have met lots of interesting girls. There are 13 of us and we meet once a month, discuss our house troubles and have lots of fun.

I hope this letter hasn't gotten tiresome and want very much to hear from you. Think it would be wonderful to have a "pen pal" over such a long number of miles.

Please write and tell me of your life and hobbies.

Sincerely,

Your friend from the U.S.,

An educator replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

May 8, 1947

DEAR _____,

I am very happy to be writing this letter to an American woman. Like you, I am very interested in the way you live and what you do. I have gathered from your letter that you are happy and contented. The war is over, your dear husband is back with you, all is happiness and light, and best of all you have your first baby.

A few words about myself and what I do. I am 42, a Russian. My first husband, a doctor, went to the battle areas in the very first days of the war and was killed. I grieved very deeply, for I loved him very dearly. But eventually time heals such wounds.

I met another man I learned to love and have remarried. My second husband is an officer in our Army. He was a widower with two little girls, Eleanor—ten, and Nadya—five. They are very pretty and sweet children. I love them and they love me in return. They feel I am their “mommy” and call me so.

I am very fond of doing things to please them. I often take them to the Puppet Theatre, the Zoo and other places of amusement for children. I do love them so much, it gives me such pleasure to look after them. I feel as if life had begun again for me.

I am by nature cheerful, energetic and lively. I am very fond of music, especially singing and often go to the theatre. My pet hobby is to learn new songs and then sing them in our family circle. I even sometimes sing in public in amateur concerts. This also gives me much pleasure.

My work is organizer of cultural activities for students in one of the Moscow Upper Schools (Universities). I organize concerts and lectures on literature, art and the latest scientific news. My work interests me very much. I love to give pleasure to our nice, healthy and cheerful young people. I feel younger when I am with them.

Yours sincerely,

ASSYA SIDOROVA.

CALIFORNIA : U.S.S.R.

A magazine writer and housewife writes

California, U.S.A.

July 28, 1946

TO A WOMAN IN THE U.S.S.R.:

I am a writer for national magazines on the subject of housing and architecture. My husband is an architect and we are both interested only in homes of modern design and live in one ourselves.

It would give me much pleasure to correspond with a woman in the Soviet Union who has similar interests. I am 42 years old, a graduate of a university and I spent one year in graduate work at the Sorbonne, Paris, France.

My only child is a son, aged fifteen, who is very interested in studying sciences when he gets into college.

We live near the Pacific Ocean in a particularly beautiful part of California. We are much interested in our home and garden and spend Sunday working outside. We have a very secluded patio terrace where we eat all our meals in the summer months and it is really an outdoor living room. We have no servants but share the household tasks among us.

For many years we have read everything we could about Rus-

sia and have taken the Soviet Information Bulletin for some years. It is our hope to eventually visit the U.S.S.R. Just before the war one of our close friends, an older woman with a most sympathetic mind toward the U.S.S.R. spent some months traveling through Russia and her enthusiasm for the people was great.

My son, particularly, is eager to go to Russia and he reads every word he can find on the work of the Russian scientists. We all feel that there can be real friendship between the peoples of the United States and Russia and see no reason why we should not find so many points of meeting that there would never be need of anything but lasting peace in the world for all mankind.

We are fond of music and play the symphonies here at home on our own machine. While we have many of the old composers we have also the 5th and 6th of Shostakovich which we greatly enjoy. Our life is a busy one devoted to our professions and to simple home life with much reading and music. It would give me great pleasure to hear from an unknown friend in the USSR.

Very cordially yours,

A woman architect replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.
January 26, 1946

DEAR _____,

The coming of your letter coincided with a wish of mine of old standing to correspond with some woman overseas and learn something about the life of women of my profession.

I am an architect. I had my training at the Leningrad Art Academy (architectural faculty). It is one of the oldest educational institutes in our country. Both my grandfather and my uncle were trained there in their time, but they were both painters.

Since getting my degree I have always worked as an archi-

tect and in those 18 years, even in the five years of the war, I have never been out of work. I work in the architectural office of the Ministry of Machine Building, where we plan houses and buildings of cultural use; theatres, picture playhouses, clubs, etc., for the people working in the numerous mills and plants of our Ministry. Our plants are scattered all over our vast country. The greatly differing climatic conditions and mode of life of our workers often oblige us architects to go to study the sites where the houses planned by us are built. Thus I have traveled all over the Union, from the White Sea to the borders of Afghanistan and from the Baltic to the Pacific Coast. I was born and raised in the Far East and all my childhood and teens have been spent on the Pacific—not so warm and beautiful as in California, perhaps, but still very dear to my heart.

The architectural office I work in is not very large. We are only 18 workers, (not counting the draftsmen) and eight of us are women. Two of these are building engineers, two building technicians and four architects. We have quite a good library at our office and get many American and other foreign magazines, though they take a very long time to reach us. We try to use in our planning all the latest achievements of house-planning.

This season I am going to build a big apartment house here in the capital.

I am 43 and a widow. Like you I have an only child, a daughter aged 15. She is now in the 7th grade at school. After finishing the seventh grade she will go on to the special grades of Soviet school which serve as preparation for later university education. If she finishes school with distinction she will be able to go to a University without sitting for entrance exams.

If your son would like to write her a few words, we would both be very pleased.

Like you I love music and often go to concerts. This season Musical Moscow will celebrate two important dates: 80 years since the foundation of the Moscow Conservatory and 75 years since the birth of the late celebrated composer Scriabin. If you like the music of Dmitry Shostakovich, I advise you to try to hear—if that is possible in your country—his 8th Symphony. I think it one of his best opuses.

I think I have taken up enough of your time and attention, so I will now close in the firm hope to get an answer. I will do my best to answer all your questions as fully as possible.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely,

S. IZHAKINA.

IOWA : U.S.S.R.

A farmer's wife writes

Iowa, U.S.A.

September 25, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I was asked, "Would you like a Russian pen pal," and of course I was very much pleased at the idea.

I will try and give you a picture of our life. We live on a farm, about 200 acres. We raise chickens, hogs and have several milch cows. In the field we raise oats, hay, corn and soybeans.

We have a nice eight-room house completely modern, water, gas range, gas fireplace, furnace and two bathrooms. We think our furniture is real nice. Of course, it is not very expensive.

There are three in our family. My husband, age 27, our son, Jimmie, age 6 and myself, age 27. We live just two miles from town.

We like to see good shows; also, we enjoy basketball and baseball games. We also play several games at home in the evening. I also like to go bowling. That costs too much, so I haven't been bowling for about two years now.

I do all my own sewing. I make everything I wear, even to my coats. I have an electric sewing machine. I make Jimmie's clothes also. He is going to school this year, so it is very quiet around here. I belong to a book club and have several good

books. I could sit and read all day. I just love it. I work out in the fields in the spring, by riding the tractor.

Well, I think that is all this time. Please write to me.

Yours truly,

A teacher replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

May 10, 1947

DEAR FRIEND _____,

Excuse me for such an informal beginning but your kind letter roused in me such sympathy for you, that I feel entitled to address you as an old acquaintance and friend. I was very pleased to learn about life in your State, and especially about you, an American woman, who knows and does many things, and it made me want to tell you about the way we live here in the Soviet Union, how we spend our spare time and what we are interested in. I am much older than you in years, but have remained young in spirit, so I hope I won't bore you with my letters. To live in a country where women have all civil rights, where all walks of life are open to her, is a wonderful feeling and helps to keep you young and boost up your spirit.

I am now 46 and have been teaching at the Moscow University for 26 years. I lecture on Modern History, History of the Middle Ages, Philosophy and Esthetics. To be teaching young people and to see the fruit of one's labor gives great moral satisfaction. I am great friends with my pupils. This is probably owing to the fact that I am not only a teacher, but the mother of three children as well. And then, my own turn of character—liveliness and strength of spirit—makes me keep young. I am very happy it is so. So many beautiful things lie ahead and I am able to share in them.

There is a very happy event in my life. Yesterday my son, who is 26 years, has come home from the Army. He is a film

cameraman and very taken by his job. My daughter, Novella, is 19 and a freshman at the Moscow University. She is a very modest, sensitive girl, and is very fond of literature and languages. She can speak German fluently and is now studying English. A thorough knowledge of at least two foreign languages is compulsory at the University and one must be able to speak a third. My youngest daughter is 15 and in the last grade of secondary school. As you can see for yourself, I am a rich mother and entitled to feel proud.

Notwithstanding the great quantity of creative pedagogical and scientific work I have to do, I devote a lot of my time to the upbringing of my children. Both my girls are very fond of the theatre, music and sports, and so, to develop their artistic sense I often take them to a play or a concert and we discuss it afterwards at home. In winter, we go skating together. I am very fond of this sport and I am proud to say I am no worse at it than my girls.

I was very pleased to hear that you love to read and are a member of a book club. It is a great pleasure to keep up with modern literature and to read a lot. I must confess that I share your weakness with you—I could read all day through. Being a teacher I have to plan my days carefully and as there is a lot of reading I must do, I read for two to three hours a day. But I can't sew. In this matter you are more advanced though younger than I am, and I envy you. Still, here we have our clothes made to order for us at State dressmaking and tailoring establishments, where the work is done by expert workers. Embroidery in silks and beads is also done at these establishments for a reasonable price. I must confess that I love to dress well. At your age I was mad about clothes and even now I don't forget myself when ordering clothes for my girls. I would like to have your latest fashions. I like your American fashions so much, they are severe, but elegant and refined.

You tell in your letter that in summer you work on the land and even drive a tractor. I also love the country but I can't drive a tractor. There are many girl tractor drivers on our collective farms but they are professionals. They earn very good wages. Last year I went for my summer holidays to the Tchalov

Region. That is a grain country. Our people are now firmly convinced of the advantages of collective farming. Collective market gardening is also very popular here. You tell me you keep pigs, cows and poultry. That must mean a lot of work and you must have a hired farmhand to cope with all the duties. Does it pay?

A warm handshake for you and kind regards to your husband. Kiss your little boy for me, please, and do write more about him in your next letter. I adore children.

Yours with esteem,

MARIA IVANOVA.

P.S.—I will look forward to your letters very much. I would like to know what books have appeared recently. Does your boy like books? Such sweet books for small children are published here and I could send him some if he would like it.

NEW JERSEY : U.S.S.R.

A worker in a children's home writes

*New Jersey, U.S.A.
March 21, 1946*

DEAR UNKNOWN FRIEND:

I believe that I am more moved today than ever before to correspond with a young woman in the Soviet Union like yourself. Not only am I interested in knowing about you and the kind of life you lead, but I do sincerely hope that our exchange of letters will bring at least two people in our mutual countries closer together in understanding one another.

I am 24 years old. I work for a children's institution here.

There are about 50 children living at this home and another 30 who live with different families in the community. All of these

children have parents who are unable to take care of them because of death, illness and other reasons. Our institution gives these children temporary care until their parents are able to take them home again.

My particular work here consists of finding families who are willing to give these children a home. I also bring the children to their foster homes and visit them in order to see if they like their foster families and are happy. Part of my job is to determine whether the children really need to be placed in an institution or whether the parents can find some other solution to their problems.

I would be very interested in knowing about children's homes in the Soviet Union. What happens to children in your country when their parents cannot take care of them?

Of course, I would like to know all about you and the kind of work you do. I do hope that you will write to me soon.

Sincerely yours,

A worker in a cotton spinning mill replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.
January, 1947

DEAR _____,

Your letter, was received by me, a former pupil of one of the "Children's Homes" (orphanages) in the U.S.S.R. you are so interested in.

I am 18. My parents both died in 1935 and I was taken into state guardianship and placed in one of the Children's Homes of the Moscow Region. Two years ago I left my dear home, where I spent eleven years of my life, but I still go there on a visit whenever I have time. That Home is about 30 kilometers away from Moscow, the capital of our country, and situated in very picturesque surroundings. Into Children's Homes are taken chil-

dren from 7 to 18 years old whose parents are dead or got lost in the war.

I always remember with a very warm feeling the years spent in the Home. In our free hours there were lots of things to do; we had various circles, a dramatic group, a choreographic class, a glee club, music classes, classes in embroidery and cutting and sewing clothes. We also went to Moscow to the theatres or film shows. We liked these outings very much for we all love our lovely Moscow.

Dear ———, I want to tell you about my present life and work. I finished seventh-grade school at the Home and then, as it was war-time, I decided I would be more useful to my country if I would go to work in industry. So in 1944 I went to some industrial classes and after finishing them began work in the Reoutovo Cotton Spinning Mills. This factory is 16 kilometers away from Moscow. My friends and I used to go on our days off to the Central Park of Culture and Rest. There we would go boating, or for a short flight in an airplane or would go the round of amusements. In winter all the parks of the capital are turned into skating rinks or given over to skiing.

But now I have less spare time, for the war is over, and I have decided to improve my education. So after working hours I go to evening school for young workers. After graduating from tenth-grade school I want to get a college education.

Dear ———, let me congratulate you on the occasion of the New Year (already here) and wish that all your dreams should come true. 1947 is an especially happy year for me for I am going to vote for the first time in my life in the elections of our Government. I am very interested to know at what age do women in your country get to vote and take part in the elections of your Government?

On this I am going to close my letter.

Dear ———, do write me please all about your life and how you spend your spare time. Why didn't you mention your family?

I will now look forward to your answer.

With friendly greetings,

ELIZAVETA FOURMAN

WASHINGTON : U.S.S.R.

A woman from the remote Northwest writes

*Washington, U.S.A.
January 3, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

It is a little difficult to compose a letter to an entirely unknown correspondent.

I have wanted to get in touch with some one in Russia for a long time. I am keenly interested in your progress there, and would especially like to know someone personally who is taking an active part in the great experiment. You see we over here are so far removed from the scene of that development that to us it still seems an experiment.

This particularly I would want to impress upon you—there are many people, both men and women here in America, who feel the warmest of friendship for you there and for all you are doing and have done in your country.

Now for the personal slant, for I want that equally as much as I want the more scientific approach to this friendship. I have been married twenty years and am the mother of a teen-age sailor. I am forty-five years old.

I am not at all an average American, for I live in the country, on a rather remote island way up in the northwestern United States, just about as far northwest as you could go and still be in the main body of the country. That is not including Alaska. There are no factories here, though we do have some small industry, and fishing and farming are the main sources of livelihood. We happen to own one hundred and sixty acres of wild land from which we cut wood and sell same for fuel. This is a small scale operation, for we hire no one. My husband and I cut all the wood for sale and deliver the product in our own truck.

We live very simply, in fact, have only a small "two by four" cabin up here in the hills. And from most points of view would

be considered quite poor. But we feel very rich indeed for we take time to live, to read, and to appreciate our surroundings. We have no desire to be rich by the common standard of amassing sheer wealth.

There is so much I would like to know about you and about Russia—not affairs of state—but just the simple little things, such as how you live, what you think and what constitutes your hopes and dreams, not as members of a Soviet so much as just ordinary members of the human race, like myself.

I await eagerly an answer to this letter. I wish I could write or speak Russian but that is, or would be like Greek to one with my poor brain.

Sincerely,

A factory worker replies

*Rostov, U.S.S.R.
November, 1947*

DEAR _____,

I have read and re-read your letter both with pleasure and emotion. And did I feel ashamed when I read how you tried to spell out the Russian words, for I don't know your language either and here in this country there are so many opportunities to learn foreign languages. Oh well, still I hope to be able to read your letters in the original—not my self, but my son Seryozha. He is at school and here one can choose what language one prefers to be taught. Seryozha and I have decided he will choose English.

Dear _____, I'm very, very happy you've had a good year for your fishing. It must be a hard life to be so dependent on the caprices of nature and to know one has nobody to rely on in case of hard luck except oneself. Here we are accus-

tomed to feel "one's neighbor's shoulder" and we know that in case of misfortune we'll always get help from the Government.

I was pleased to hear you had read "Anna Karenina" the novel by our classic, Leo Tolstoy. Have you read any of the other Russian classics and the works of our modern writers that have appeared in the course of the last 5 to 10 years? Have you or your son read any of the works of our great Soviet writer Maxim Gorky?

I have the works of your American classic Mark Twain. My son and I, and even my husband often laugh to tears over the adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. I am so sorry my full set of Jack London was destroyed by fire during the war. I have also read the works of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair, Norris', *The Octopus*, *Grapes of Wrath*, by Steinbeck, *Elliot Roosevelt's*, *As He Saw It*, *Ralph Ingersoll's*, *Top Secret*, *Walt Whitman's*, *Leaves of Grass*, and *O'Henry's*, *Kings and Cabbages*. So you see I have some inkling of what the average American is like. I like him for his fundamental traits, he is hard-working, businesslike, honest and generous—traits the American people have in common with us.

You say you always read the speeches of the U.N. conferences. Nations can live under the same system of government and be foes, and can have different systems yet live in friendship. We all think like that.

I and my friends to whom I read your letter at first couldn't understand what war you were fearing—we are so engrossed in our peaceful labor that we just simply don't pay attention to hysteria in other parts of the world. We think nobody wants war, except perhaps those who make money out of it.

Dear ———, I would also like very much to meet you. Translators could be easily found for several of my friends speak English. I would cook for you our national dish borscht (a sort of beet soup) and some fish from the river Don, that you would appreciate being an expert in the matter. And afterwards I would take you for a roam in my dear city Rostov.

Oh yes! If any of your women friends would like to have Soviet pen friends, I could easily supply them with addresses of my friends who want to have American friends.

As to your wish to send me something to remember you by, do send me your photograph. This will be the best present you can make me.

Always your friend,

ANTONINA VYASOVSKAYA

A second letter from the Northwest

Washington, U.S.A.

June 4, 1948

DEAR _____,

Your letter is here before me on my dining room table. It is something approaching a miracle to see it there and realize that it has come from across the world, to establish a bond between two people so far removed in point of mileage. It is equally wonderful to realize that with all our differences, language barriers and so forth, we are still so much alike in many ways.

You seem so warm and close to me. All that distance between us after all amounts to nothing really. So it is, if all the little people all over the world could know each other, they would also discover that we are all fundamentally the same in our hopes and desires. The knowledge that you, too, traveled down the old Mississippi River with Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, have read so many of the same books and dreamed the same dreams, heard the same music and are building for the same freedoms that we struggle to attain and cherish, all these things tear away the miles and the language differences. Antonina, my friend, I salute you.

You said that in Russia, "we are accustomed to feel one's neighbors shoulder" and that is equally true here in so far as it can be. Once, we lost our home and everything we owned, even all our clothing by fire. My boy was badly burned. The neighbors got together had dances and took up donations. We soon had even more than we had before in linens and household goods. One felt their love and their kindly interest. We lost things that

we never could replace, pictures and books and keepsakes. But we were strengthened, too, by the good will and warm hearted love of our neighbors.

I have read only a few excerpts from Maxim Gorky. I read "Crime and Punishment" by, oh it's no use, I can't remember his name or spell it if I could remember it. Do you have as bad a time with English names as I have with Russian ones?

I am sending you a snapshot of me taken in California. The baby is my grandson. Also a picture of my son and his dog. A little corner of our house shows in the background. Can you send me a picture of yourself?

Love,
_____.

OHIO : U.S.S.R.

A dairy farmer's wife writes

*Ohio, U.S.A.
June 18, 1947*

TO MY RUSSIAN SISTER:

I am wondering just who you are and where you live, and whether you will be glad to hear from an American woman, 59 years old, a native of Ohio.

In 1928 I married a farmer and have lived here on the farm ever since.

My husband, by hard work and thrift, paid for his dairy farm which is stocked with 30 head of Holstein cattle. Our milk is trucked to Cleveland where it is processed in a milk plant.

Our house is the original frame house built when the farm was first cleared from the forest. It has been somewhat remodeled and is very comfortable if not too fine.

I am interested in church and school. Tonight I am giving a party for our church choir, assisted by four other women.

It must be interesting to live in a great country like Russia where so much progress has been made in the last twenty-five years. I shall be glad to hear from you if you care to write. I want to assure you that we American women are interested in the progress and welfare of women all over the world and want to do our part in making this world a brotherhood where all people, of all races, are equal partakers of God's bounty.

Yours sincerely,

_____.

An engineer replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

June 23, 1948

GREETINGS, DEAR _____,

I have read with great interest your letter dated June 18, 1947. I was deeply touched by its sincerity and the community of feelings between us.

I have read your letter very attentively and liked its contents. Many things in your life are intimately known to me and I understand them.

Dear sister, allow me to introduce myself. I am 37 years old and live in Moscow. I am a University graduate and a certified engineer. I have two children. My husband was killed in action in the last days of World War II.

I come from a poor peasant family of the Kursk region. Since my earliest days I wanted a good education. Thanks to our Soviet Government I have reached the goal I had set myself, for here everybody is afforded all facilities to get the sort of education he or she wants. I first graduated from seventh-grade school, then went to workers' classes at the factory and finally went through college and qualified as an engineer in Moscow.

I hope that our correspondence will now become regular and

we are going to answer each other's letters punctually. This will draw us close together, for all working women the world over have the same aims and interests.

Please give my kind regards to your family. And do tell me please about life on a farm, both for farmers and farmhands. I know already about city life in America from the works of American authors.

Also do tell me what pictures of Russia you'd like to have and I will be happy to send you views of my country.

With sincere esteem,

Yours

VERA KARRASSYOVA

U.S.S.R. : KANSAS

A factory worker writes

*Moscow, U.S.S.R.
October 15, 1948*

DEAR _____,

I just received your letter and sit down immediately to answer, as I wish you to have my answer as soon as possible.

Your letter came when it was still summer, but couldn't find me, for I was away for two months on my holiday and have come back just lately.

So now we are really acquainted, and I sincerely hope that we will be able to keep up our correspondence and will become real friends.

Dear I was deeply touched by your interest to hear from far-away Moscow and the sincere sympathy that breathes in your letter. I hope that many Americans share your opinions.

You write about what you do at your club. I'm very interested to know if there are many club members and if you often

have papers on such serious subjects like your paper on cartels and if many women of your social standing are interested in social and political problems.

In general I would like to know as much as possible about the life, customs and likings of average American women. And of course most of all I would like to know about you. Tell me for instance how you spend your day—this will be very interesting.

You asked about our family. Yes, we all do live in one house that belongs to my father (here anybody can own a house, provided it does not serve for profit, but only for one's own and one's family's use). The house isn't very big, but pretty and cozy. Dad in his time had it altered to his taste, but the house itself is very old and can remember the First Patriotic War of 1812. During the air raids of 1941 several times incendiary bombs fell on our house and we put them out ourselves with sand. We had a very frightening time, but everything came out all right in the end.

I would like to tell you about how I spent my holiday this summer. I went first to see the sea side near Riga and later went with Dad on a trip to Armenia, one of the Republics of our Union, situated in the South Caucasus. It was a wonderful trip, but to tell about it I would have to write a whole new letter and I think I ought already to close.

In my next letter I will try to tell you more about myself.

Your friend

IRINA KUZNETSOVA

A farmer's wife replies

*Kansas, U.S.A.
December 1, 1948*

DEAR _____,

Your letter came the day before yesterday and I was so happy to have it. I had just about decided that you hadn't received my letter, or that maybe it was true, your government didn't want you to write to me because of this awful "cold war"

our papers talk about. So you see your letter immediately dispelled that fear, and already our correspondence has made for more understanding. You see I am determined that I shall do my little tiny bit toward furthering understanding, and peace on earth. World peace is based greatly on understanding, isn't it? There must be a *will* toward peace, and it is too easy for people to think of money as being the most important thing of all. I worry about all this, too, dear ————. I agree with you that war is the most horrible crime. I do so hope your country is evolving an economic system which will be more conducive to peace. As I understand it, your system lays the emphasis more on human needs and comfort than on the acquisition of money.

You asked about the life, customs and likings of American women. The average *farm* woman has a family to wash, iron, and cook for. They tend to raising the chickens and garden, but most of them do not run tractors, though a few do. As for me, I taught school until I was 40 years old, and I thought that was too old to want a family. My husband is older, too. You are much younger and should marry and have a family of your own. I understand that Russian women can marry and have a family and still go on with their jobs if they care to. That there are nursery homes for the children during the day.

It is interesting about what you say about owning your homes. Some people here think that Russians can own no property at all. I had read differently but it is nice to have you tell me individually about such things. You can own cars, too, can you not? We, my husband and I have two farms, they are not of the most valuable land. My mother's and mine is grass land entirely, and we lease it to men who have cattle to eat the grass. Sometimes my mother and I help to care for the cattle. We ride our horses and see that the cattle do not stand around a windmill when there is no wind, but go on to the ponds and creek. Then we count them to be sure none are being stolen or straying away.

Now so much of my letter is about me, and I am far more interested in you. Your summer vacation trip sounds *wonderful*. I wrote to our Committee of Friendship the other day, and asked them if they could help us find a good Russian map for sale. My mother wants one, and I thought I would get it for a Christmas

present for her. When I get it, I will locate the region of the South Caucasus, Riga, Armenia, and I hope you will tell me of your trip in great detail. Things you tell me give me information to talk about to people who have such wrong impressions of your government, and the state of your people. They think it would be terrible to live where they could not own land and a lot of property. They do not stop to think that a lot of our people are propertyless because the depressions keep them so poor. Many more do not have their needs satisfied. That is a condition found in the southern part of our country, where there are a lot of black people and poor white people. Tell me, do you have no discrimination against colored people? I read that you do not, but it seems almost too good to be true.

I am interested in what you say of your cottage. Our house is white with a green roof, and we have what we call a wash house near, where I do more than the laundry. I have a basement under it, in which I keep my canned fruit, and lots of "junk." In that house we keep a bed for ourselves or extra persons that might be working for us. Here we hire people to work. We, personally do not, for we aren't wealthy. But some times we hire a man to help with the plowing, then we need extra beds.

Housing is one of our great national problems however. You mentioned the incendiary bombs that fell on your home. My husband said, "and then people here think they know something of war." We know we do not.

I wondered if you always take as much time as two months on your summer holiday, or could it be that you were not well, and needed extra time. Here a vacation usually consists of two weeks on pay.

Well, this is a long letter and perhaps I had better close for this time. Do you have some 16-year-old boy or girl friends or relatives that would like to write to my 16-year-old nieces? One is already interested in people of other lands, the other I think is not so much, but I would like her to be. Do you have friends who know English?

Must close.

Your friend,

NEW YORK : U.S.S.R.

A churchwoman writes

New York, U.S.A.

October 20, 1948

DEAR FRIEND IN THE SOVIET UNION:

Greeting from the United States of America. I am sending friendly wishes to you, someone whom I do not yet know. I am very anxious to start this correspondence because I belong to a group of women connected with a Baptist church and want to give them some first-hand knowledge of your country and your way of life. I know that a great many things that are not true are being said by people who wish to make trouble between our two countries, so that it is hard to know what is really going on. The more we know about each other, the better we shall understand each other and these iron curtains they talk about will rust away.

Most of the women to whom I want to show your letter are grandmothers. They are very much interested in helping people who are poor, sick or in trouble and they are constantly raising money for this purpose. Once a month they meet to sew and roll bandages and make quilts and clothes to send to people in China, Burma, Puerto Rico and other places where our missionaries live. I would like to have you explain to them about your government, and just how much power the people have in owning the factories, in collective farms, in voting and so on. I would also like to have details about how the children are cared for.

We are also vitally interested in having a peaceful world, so that our grandchildren (I have three) can look forward to lives of security and usefulness, and I know that you are also deeply concerned about this too. We feel that the U.N. is our only hope for world peace, and that women like us should make our opinions felt.

My husband and I live in a three room apartment now that our four sons and daughter are all married. My principal interest is in civic work with women, studying and writing. I am also

very fond of music, and play the piano a little. As with all grandparents, my husband and I are a little foolish about our grandchildren, two of whom are in California and one in Iowa. We hope to visit them very soon.

Hoping to hear from you before long and with best wishes,
I am,

Cordially yours,

A scientist replies

Moscow, U.S.S.R.
December 21, 1948

DEAR _____,

I have your letter for which I thank you.

I also want to express my hope that our budding friendship will grow and prosper. That you can have some sort of picture of your new friend, I am going to tell you in a few words about myself.

I grew up in Soviet times. I graduated from the University and like very many girls in our country I decided to take a post-graduate course. Now holding a M. Sc. degree I am working for my Dr. Sc. degree.

I have been married for 12 years now. My husband is also a scientist. We had a son but he was drowned last year in a lake while swimming.

We live with my parents in a big and comfortable apartment. I work very hard. I try to live my life so that I shouldn't have to be ashamed of it in after-years. I spend my life so that I can say to all my friends—both those near me and now also my far-away friends—that all my energies have been devoted to the most beautiful of all aims—the good of all people.

Thus, I have worked during the last horrible war, thus I work now, when we all are engrossed in rehabilitating our country after the ravages of war, when the gigantic creative labor of our people transform our Soviet Union day by day.

I think that all those "iron curtains" you write about will rust away and disappear as soon as you learn to know our beautiful actuality.

Our life, the life of all people in the Soviet Union is the life of people who believe in their future and who have a future. Our Government takes really great care of our people. Here every one of us knows that if the need arises he will be helped. And, therefore, our main concern is the common interest.

We, women, have equal rights with men. Not only have we equal rights in voting but also in our everyday life, in everything at work and at home. And at the same time, we, women, get great help in those things when help is needed.

We women are vitally concerned that there should be no war. And you, our friends, women of the U.S.A. can greatly help us in winning the cause of world peace. I also hope to get a letter from you telling me about the progress you've made in your social work.

Your love for your grandchildren is very touching. Please give them each a kiss for me.

With my very best wishes and sincere esteem,

Your friend

EUGENIA PARLOVA

U.S.S.R. : IOWA

A motion picture research worker writes to a young mother and former school teacher

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

October 19, 1948

DEAR _____,

By the time you get this letter you will already be a happy young mother. My most cordial congratulations, dear, on this happy event. Is it a boy or a girl? What did you name it? Do tell

me please what you think of motherhood. I know by my own experience how motherhood does enrich a woman's life, makes it really full.

How will you work now, who will look after the baby while you are away at work? Here all women get 35 days of paid leave before and 42 days after the birth of a baby. Lying-in homes are free, the same as all medical care in this country, A doctor comes to your home on call and patients get advice and treatment at clinics and in hospitals, all free of charge. We pay only for medicine, and this costs very little. Everybody who works gets an annual holiday on full pay and if ill, gets his pay all the time of his illness and recovery. All this is called here Social Insurance. Thanks to this system, millions of working people spend their holidays in Rest and Convalescent homes.

I also went this summer to a Rest Home in a very lovely park near the river Moscow. The weather was very warm, the sky cloudless and I would go in for a long swim and then bake in the sun on the beach. The company at the Rest Home was very varied. Next to me at the table were an old working woman from a tobacco factory, very clever, having seen much in her life; a lady bookkeeper, an amateur artist, member of the "Dance and Song Group" of one of our big plants (there are such groups of workers and office workers in each big plant or factory. Those members who show talent are sent to be taught to special institutions and sometimes become outstanding professionals). In the evening a gay crowd would gather in the large flower garden before the house. On hot, still nights the fragrance of aromatic tobacco plants would be so sweet as to be almost overpowering. If the sky were overcast, all would gather in the vast, glassed-in sun porch, and would play, recite poetry, dance and sing to the accompaniment of the piano.

I became friends during my stay there with a young woman, a specialist on the history of theatrical art—a lovely, gay, lively girl—though she only has one leg. She lost the other in the war. She volunteered for war service when a fourth year student at the Theatrical Arts Institute. She went first as a nurse, but later qualified as a gunner. In one of the battles she was wounded and lost a leg. After leaving the hospital, she went back to her

college and graduated. I have another girl friend, a doctor, who also served a long time in the front lines. Please, tell me, do you have any women friends that have served in the fighting lines in this last war?

Do you know what almost all the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Crimea, looked like after the fascists had been driven back? Smoking ruins where busy towns and villages had been, ruins instead of lovely marble palaces, mounds of broken stone and twisted iron where great plants and factories had been, and around them fields—so ploughed up by shells, so trampled underfoot, so quickly strewn with metal fragments you would think wheat could never grow on them again. And thousands, hundreds of thousands of people with no roof over their heads, hungry, in tatters, ailing, worn out by Fascist captivity.

Only 3½ years have passed since then and the country has already effaced the scars left by war and rehabilitated and modernized most of what had been destroyed, the fields are again golden with crops. The homeless have new houses, children new schools, the ailing clinics and hospitals, people have again gone to work in newly erected factories which they have rebuilt with their own hands, all together.

If you had seen, all this grief and ruin, and afterwards the enthusiasm, the ardour with which people worked—you would understand that only the great and beautiful friendship of people, only the powerful, undefeatable collective can perform such wonders.

Dear ———, you write that Mark Twain's heroes chose a carefree and easy existence because they liked it. But I am sure that nobody would choose to wander about the country with no steady means of existence like some of Twain's heroes (I don't speak of boys for whom everything is just play) if they had a good job with a steady income.

When I re-read Mark Twain's works (and I do so often) I see in him a passionate, irreconcilable champion of those vagabonds he describes so well. Especially of the Negroes he speaks of with such compassion and with such indignation of their tormentors. A great master, as Twain was, can't write without expressing his views. And Twain gave vent very actively to his

disgust with those who didn't consider Negroes to be human. It is for this humanity, for this vivid quality of his sympathy and antipathy, that Twain is so greatly loved in this country.

Are you bored perhaps with my reasonings? But then we have agreed to be perfectly frank with each other and I want to speak as fully as possible about the problems raised in your letter, so that we could understand each other better, and could become really close friends. I am very grateful to you for your long and exceedingly interesting letter. It made me think about many things, remember a lot.

Please tell me, are there any Negroes among your friends? Are there any Negroes among the students and faculty of the institute where you work? Do tell me at length about the conditions for educated Negroes in your town? Have you read the novel by Sinclair Lewis "Kingsblood Royal?" What do you think of it?

You asked about rationing. During the war, there were two price scales on all commodities; a low price accessible to all on ration cards, and a high, commercial price without ration cards. The difference in prices was very great and not everyone could afford to buy in the commercial stores. Sufficient food was sold on ration coupons but one had little choice in buying what he wanted, and had to take whatever came along. But now, after the introduction of the monetary reform and the abolition of the rationing system, there is but one uniform price list based on the ration price level, while bread and cereals are even cheaper than the former ration prices. Prices on the open market also dropped suddenly.

Please tell me what you would like to know. If you're interested, I can tell you in my next letter about our collective farming or about women's rights and life in this country, about our literature and art.

Don't fail to tell me about your baby, the progress it makes and how happy you feel about it.

Wishing you the best of luck and please give my kind regards to your family.

Sincerely

ELGA KOFF

U.S.S.R. : KANSAS

A woman interpreter of languages writes

*Moscow, U.S.S.R.
October 26, 1948*

DEAR _____,

Here I am again, as I promised, four weeks after my last letter. I do hope you are going to write me once a month, for I feel a very personal interest in you and your family, just as if I really knew you.

I wanted to send you views of the new parts of Moscow, but couldn't get up-to-date ones. Moscow is very hard to keep up with for building goes on at a tremendous pace. Houses go up as if by magic. This year the stress has been laid on turning Moscow into a "green city." All the streets that are broad enough (so as not to obstruct traffic) are planted with rows of trees, mostly 40 to 50 year old limes, so that they are shady from the very outset and you can imagine how lovely it is during flowering time. Everywhere, where space allows it, green squares and public gardens are laid out, with many lovely flowering trees and shrubs and flower borders. Often fruit trees are planted in these squares, so that soon the famous apple trees in the square before the Big Opera and Ballet House that have been heralding spring in Moscow for years won't be the only ones to do so. The yards of big apartment houses are also being turned into gardens for children to play in, with sand piles and swings, comfortable garden seats for mothers and grannies, and sometimes tables for the older children to do their homework in fine weather. And in winter there are ice slides and artificial snow hillocks for the smaller kids to toboggan from. They look so sweet and healthy, tumbling in the snow with cheeks all ruddy and eyes dancing with fun.

We've had the first real frost here today. When I woke up

in the morning it looked just lovely. The sun was rising and the hoar frost on the roofs and in the gardens was sparkling with pink and blue fires. It is cold outside but so warm inside that I have only a short sleeved seersucker housecoat on, for I have been "doing" my room—I am subject from time to time to fits of "administrative exaltation," as my stepfather used to call it, When I begin turning out closets and cupboards and tidying bookshelves, etc.

Oh dear, when I think of all the misery, the bloodshed, the privations . . . my blood turns cold at the sole mention of war. We know what war means. When I think of the sirens shrieking in the night in the first awful months of the war, of women running in the dark to the shelters clasping children to their breasts, of the unearthly glare of incendiary bombs, of the shattering bangs of high explosive bombs . . . I was in the First Aid Squad of the house where mother lives, for of course I went to her as soon as there was danger. I have seen German bombers caught in the web of searchlights, surrounded by bursts of ack-ack shells. I have seen one of them burst into flame and fall somewhere further off. Oh, and Marina's poor, pale, anxious little face—she was only ten—when she was being sent away into safety with her "nanny" and some friends of ours who were going to Sverdlovsk. I tried to distract her attention by telling her of all the interesting things she would see, but could not wheedle even a smile out of her. First we sent Marina away as she is the youngest, then the boys, they went to the boarding school of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. opened in Borovoye for the children by scientific workers and the staffs of the Research Institutes. Later, on October 16, 1941, mother was also ordered to go by the President of the Academy, and of course I went with her—how could I leave her—leaving here my friend—the man I told you about. I did not even say goodbye to him, he was away on a mission. He was a C.O. in the Air Force. I never was to see him again. In August 1943, just before the return to Moscow, I got a letter telling me he'd been killed.

If you are interested, I'll tell you about Borovoye in one of my next letters. It is a famous health resort and is right in the middle of a wild life sanctuary. The animals and birds there are

absolutely unafraid of humans—just like the bears in Yellowstone Park that I saw pictured in the magazine “America.”

I keep thinking of the coming Presidential elections in your country. There are very few people in the Soviet Union that are not interested in politics; only the very young and the very old. Our leading newspapers are published in several millions of copies and yet they are the commodity people queue up for. And you must bear in mind that each copy is read not by one person only. I should say the average figure would be four to five people per copy, perhaps more. In the country (on collective farms) the newspapers are usually read aloud in groups during the noon pause, and in the towns copies are posted on special billboards for all to read. I don't think there is a country where papers and books are more widely read than in the Soviet Union.

And in our newspapers you'll never find war hysteria, never any propaganda of hate against other nations. Except for the last two pages that are devoted to international events and reports on the U.N. activities (many of the speeches are published in full), newspapers devote most of their space to the new governmental decrees about agricultural measures, tree planting, rotating shifts of crops, etc.

There will be several wide zones of tree plantations stretching all the way across the European part of the Soviet Union from the Arctic to its southern boundaries. Trees will be also planted everywhere around fields, and all the existing woods, forests and copses will be preserved and enlarged. There is a lot more, but if I tried to tell all about it, my letter would become a book—it is outsize as it is and I am afraid to bore you.

I am enclosing several reproductions of paintings by famous Russian masters of the 19th century. Next time I'll send you reproductions of paintings by Soviet masters.

On Sunday the football team of the Central Club of the Red Army won the “U.S.S.R. Football Cup” and this closed the football season. The same team won the 1948 Championship of the Union, so our Alyosha is in seventh heaven, for he is an ardent “fan” of this team.

Well, my dear, goodbye for the present and I do hope you'll write soon. I am very eager to hear your news—all your news.

Best luck to the boys—how are they getting on? And my warm love to you.

From your friend so far away

KATYA ANDREYEV

KANSAS : U.S.S.R.

A farmer's wife writes

*Kansas, U.S.A.
February 16, 1948*

DEAR UNKNOWN FRIEND OF RUSSIA,

I am a middle aged country woman of the United States of America. I live in the state of Kansas which is about the central part of the United States. I am interested in knowing something about you farm women of Russia. I think most people learn to like each other if they can only understand the life and thoughts of each other.

We, women of America, are a happy people and above all are peace-loving. We cannot see the need of terrible cruel wars where our loved ones are killed and wounded. It breaks our hearts to have our own young men have to sacrifice so much to have to go to war and also for the young men of any country to have to fight and kill. It seems such a senseless thing. We believe that we are all brothers and sisters and the Bible tells us that we should love one another. And surely we are not loving one another when we are engaged in cruel wars.

Our sympathy goes out to the people who have lived in lands that were bombed and ruined and where the people are cold and hungry. We are sending food, money, clothing, etc., anything that we can do to help to relieve the suffering of our sisters that live over the waters from us. We only wish we could do more.

I live on a 320 acre farm. This is a prosperous community. Almost all of the farmers own their homes. Most of our homes

have bathrooms and all have electricity. I cook with electricity. Most of the women take their laundry to town to a "Help Yourself Laundry" where they do their own washing on an electric washing machine. Hot water and soap is furnished them and they can hang their clothes to dry there if they wish. It is nice that way because we do not have to clean up after we get through washing and do not have to handle any of the water.

We are getting ready to drill oats. We raise mostly wheat in Kansas. However, we have quite a lot of cattle and of course have to grow some grain and feed for them. We will begin planting our gardens in March for that is when our potatoes have to be in the ground. We just raise small family gardens. We grow lots of wild plums here on our farm that make nice jelly and butter. I saw a red bird today, so I am in hopes that spring is here. We had a snow storm last week but it is all gone today and it is so warm that I have the doors open.

Well, I must run to town and mail this letter. I hope to hear from you and learn something about your life.

Your friend

U.S.S.R. : CALIFORNIA

A teacher writes

*Moscow, U.S.S.R.
November 10, 1948*

DEAR FAR-AWAY FRIEND,

I was very happy to have your answer to my letter and I thank you for it.

You write that in America people are full of uncertainty and dread of the future, while in England they still have to cope with many hardships. Here it is not so, though of course our

country has suffered in this war. But our people never lose heart. Now our production is almost up to pre-war level, rationing has been long abolished and there is plenty of food of every kind. Our towns are beginning to look better than before the war and all those who were demobilized have got jobs. There are no unemployed here, on the contrary our rapidly developing industry, farming and transport call for more and more workers.

Our Army has been demobilized to peace dimensions. We are attacking drought in our country. Our government has adopted a grandiose plan of tree planting in the Southern steppes (prairies) that suffer from the hot, dry winds blowing from Middle Asia, just like the prairies in the U.S.A. do. Some of the work was begun in 1943. All along the rivers Volga, Don and Ural, forests will be planted. Trees will be planted also all around collective farm fields to a depth of 60 metres; everywhere irrigation canals and ponds will be dug; and in a few years we won't have to worry any more about "dry winds." There won't be any more droughts; we will have changed the climate of the southern prairies.

This is what our people are now thinking of, this is why we look so cheerfully to the future; why we all, old and young are happy to work hard for our country's sake, sooner to bring about this happy future of abundance, happiness and peace.

Well, now I must close. I have written a long letter as it is. Thank you once more for your letter. My pupils also thank you for your kind greetings and we all send you our best wishes of luck and happiness.

I will now look forward to a letter from you.

Your friend

SERAFIMA MENDELEYEVA

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

Friendship

"We hope through you to learn more about Russian people and Russian living and especially the women of your country. We wish to acquaint you with the problems, ambitions and activities of American women. Through this exchange we hope to become better and more understanding friends and neighbors in a unified world." (*From a housewife in Colorado*)

"And I say this fervently and sincerely, for I feel so strongly that we of the United States and you of Soviet Russia should have the most friendly relations. Although your soldiers and ours did not speak the same language, yet they spoke the language of friendship and understood each other. Those of our people who have visited your country open-mindedly, talk of the hospitality shown them, and so many real friendships have been established." (*From a housewife in Massachusetts*)

"For a long time I have wanted to correspond with someone in Russia, a housewife like myself, so that we could get to know each other and exchange common problems. There is so much bad feeling and erroneous thinking between various countries that I think it's very important for ordinary people to get to know each other and find out how alike we are, with about the same problems and aspirations, and interests. I'd like for more of us in different countries to get together and learn to know and appreciate each other as friends." (*From a farmer's wife in Washington*)

"If friends are among our greatest treasures in life, then a friend across the sea should indeed be a real asset, and I'm looking forward to an interesting correspondence via boats and whatever means of transportation are necessary to connect two real beings in the two largest countries of their continents." (*From a former school teacher in Iowa*)

"I am a citizen of the U.S.A., just as you are a citizen of the U.S.S.R. I am writing to you because I should like to assure you that though we have come from different cultures and customs, I think that we are really much more alike than un-alike. I am hoping that you, a Russian friend, will answer this letter so that our correspondence will be established." (*From a housewife in Missouri*)

"Many of us here in America are anxious to know more about the people of the Soviet Union and I think this is a fine way to find out." (*From a writer in Kansas*)

"The time will come when the artificial national boundaries between people will be dissolved and the whole world will be the home of all humanity. Meanwhile, it gives me joy to stretch my hand, metaphorically speaking, across the lands and oceans, and clasp yours." (*From a housewife in New York*)

"If I were as young as you, I believe I would learn the language and visit your country. Maybe some day you will visit my country. How I would welcome you into my little home!" (*From a housewife in Massachusetts*)

"Thank you ever so much for your friendly letter. It is a pleasure to know that far away across the ocean there are people in your country who are interested in our homeland, that we have friends over there. I am very thankful for the photograph you have sent me." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Let us build our friendship. Let us develop this contact by continuing to correspond, and in doing whatever we can in the struggle against war. Let us not spare any effort for a better life—for friendship among nations—for the happy future of our children." (*From an engineer in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I think also, as you do, that one can learn about a country not only from newspapers and radio broadcasts, but through the opinions and ideas of just ordinary people living in that country." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I wish you could visit us in our home, then we could really begin to know each other and the way in which we live. We so rarely have the opportunity to visit and know friends from a country other than ours. Yet, where, except in America, could you find so many people who only a generation or so back were from so many different lands." (*From the wife of a college professor in Kansas*)

"Your letter was not and could not have been too long, for a human soul is the keeper of such immense treasures that could not possibly be laid out on a small sheet of paper. Therefore, for the sake of our intellectual friendship you still have a great deal of writing to do." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Write me about whatever interests you and I shall answer with pleasure. I would appreciate having your picture, so please send me one if it isn't too much trouble. And do write, dear friend. It is so pleasant to know that I have a friend all the way across the ocean." (*From a paper-mill worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I know of the United States only through literature. Our children know about a wonderful boy called Tom Sawyer. Amidst the thousands of pages, of the best of your representative literature and culture that I have read, your letter would serve as a vivid contact between myself and American women." (*From an author in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I really enjoyed your pictures. You came out very well, the baby in her father's arms is charming. Give her a kiss on our behalf. I have ordered the embroideries for you, but they are not yet ready and I shall have to send them on later. I shall look forward eagerly to hearing from you." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

Everyday living

"Our older son has been awarded a scholarship amounting to about one-third of the cost of the instruction, but the amount left for us to pay is considerable, so my husband told him that he would pay half of the remainder if he would earn the rest. Today, he drove an automobile to the country for a man, and worked on another man's shrubs, and mowed a lady's lawn and washed dishes to earn money. He has even promised to stay with some neighbor's children while their parents go to a wedding. If he earns as much every day as he did today, he will be able to take the lessons.

"Our younger son went to a boy's camp for a week. The camp is operated by our church. He will have lessons in sports and crafts as well as instruction in international relations and world affairs. There will be Bible Study too." (*From a housewife in Kansas*)

"I derive great pleasure from the theatre and like to see both Russian and foreign dramatic plays. In winter, I skate and ski and in summer I go out into the country each Saturday to Monday, returning to work on Monday morning." (*From a scientific research worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I am now 65 and most of my life has been devoted to the rearing of my children. I have given them everything I could—an education and good guidance in their life journey. We live in a centrally located three-room apartment which has a bath, telephone, gas and other conveniences. Our house stands opposite the picturesque and historically famous Tverskoi Boulevard which is drowned in verdure and flowers during the spring and summer. I like to go there for a walk with my grandchildren." (*From a Soviet housewife*)

"If you have a map of the United States, you will see that Kansas is a rectangular state, almost in the center of the United States. It is cold in

winter and very hot in summer. There is nearly always a breeze in Kansas and its rains now and then even in the very hot summer. It is raining now and I am very glad because my garden needs moisture. We have had lettuce, onions, radishes, beets, peas, carrots, and green beans already, and our corn and tomatoes are ripening. I have some flowers, too, and they give us much pleasure." (*From a writer in Kansas*)

"I am one of the many millions of ordinary Soviet women. My childhood and youth in tzarist Russia were a hard and unhappy time of my life. In 1917 at the age of 17, I was as yet illiterate and had to earn my living by hard and unremunerative toil. Our Soviet Government changed this. Working hours were shortened, wages raised, living conditions for working women became better and I was now able to get an education. In the beginning, I continued to work and studied in my spare time. Later I was given a state scholarship and achieved not only a school, but a college education. In 1930 I graduated from the Institute of the Textile Industry and am now an engineer specializing in cotton spinning. In this capacity, I am now working in one of the largest cotton mills of our beautiful capital—Moscow." (*From an engineer in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I have a job in one of the institutes for scientific research and at the same time train at the Night School of Journalism in editorship and publishing. The whole training takes five years and then we are given six months for our qualification thesis. After getting my university degree at this school, I will work as editor in some newspaper, magazine or in one of the publishing houses." (*From a publishing worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Life has now come back to normal. We have everything we want. Our homes are warm and well lighted, and we can now buy plenty of food, books and clothing. In general life is quite good. Our orphans are also being very well taken care of." (*From a teacher in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I am a teacher. I mostly handle 9 to 10-year-old groups. I learn a great deal from them and grow with them. I think they do likewise. We are now working on a program of world unity. Believe me, our hearts are in it. We are comparing anthems and folk songs of our neighboring countries including the Soviet Union and are finding similarities in ideals, hopes, way of living, etc., that will and must make for world unity. Perhaps, I may be able to make some snapshots of my children at work and will send copies." (*From a teacher in New York*)

"I am 26. I am a doctor, specializing in epidemiology. My husband is an engineer. We have a little daughter, Lucy, two years and a half. We are

bringing her up at home with my mother to look after her. Lucy is very clever for her age. She talks very well, knows by heart several little poems, is very fond of picture books, loves to draw. I work in a Research Institute and hope to take a degree in medicine. While my daughter was quite small, I had no time to work for it, but now she has grown big enough." (*From a pre-medical student and mother in the U.S.S.R.*)

"My personal life has been quite successful. My husband is a surgeon and works at the same Institute where I do. We find harmony of interest not only with regard to family affairs (we both have an equally strong love for our ten-year-old son) but also in the similarity of our aesthetic tastes and in our common concern with our work. Some of our scientific work we do jointly." (*From a scientist in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I shall tell you how I spent the day today. In the morning I prepared breakfast, then sent my son to school. At 9 o'clock my husband and I went to the Art Workers' Club where a university course is held once a week for actors, artists, musicians and other workers of art specializing in different fields. The course includes philosophy, history of international relations, logic, psychology, aesthetics and several other subjects.

"The lectures ended at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Right after the studies I went to a store and bought some groceries and two pieces of cloth, striped shirting for my husband and a gay colored fabric suitable for a child's dress which I want to present to the little daughter of a friend of mine on her first birthday." (*From a motion picture research worker in U.S.S.R.*)

"On December 21 elections were held to the municipal and village Soviets, in a harmonious and organized manner. We elected men and women alike, irrespective of the kind of jobs they hold or of their nationality. We chose those people over 21 years of age who through capable leadership will help the people revive the country's life and lead it to cultural and economic prosperity." (*From an engineer in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Kabardine cooking is truly remarkable. In the village of which I spoke, we used to eat a wonderful chicken dish which is prepared in the following manner:

"The chicken is split into medium sliced pieces which are cooked in a flat covered pot. When the meat is nearly done, it is removed to an open frying pan full of sour cream. The chicken is boiled in the cream. At the same time, onions should be set to fry in butter. When the onions are ready, you pour them into the chicken and cream, mix the two and leave it simmering for a short while. The result is a wonderfully tasty dish. Try to prepare it yourself. I think you will not regret the time you have spent." (*From a teacher in the Kabardine Republic*)

Special interests

"I also am fond of Tchaikovsky's music. When I visited my parents Easter, we attended a special service at the church which was entirely composed of Tchaikovsky music. I do not know whether musicians approve of adapting the music of the masters to make religious songs, but at any rate we enjoyed the program very much. My parents live in a village in Missouri which is the next state east of Kansas. It is so small that I was surprised to find a choir to sing such ambitious selections, but there were about 20 men and women in the choir and they tried very hard and sounded very well. They had practiced for weeks and sang with precision and good harmony. I was proud that my little home town could have such a good program.

"I have two Tchaikovsky records of which I am very fond. They are the 'Waltz of the Flowers' and 'Sleeping Beauty Waltz.' I hope to own a whole symphony sometime, but they are quite expensive." (*From a writer in Kansas*)

"I love music and also sing a little myself. My comrades always ask me to sing and I do so with pleasure. They jokingly accuse me of singing even in the air. This is partly true. I love to sing when returning home after a successful flight." (*From an aviatrix in the U.S.S.R.—Hero of the Soviet Union*)

"I am very much interested in art, music, cooking and sewing. I took quite a bit of music in school, I played the piano for the boys' chorus and the mixed chorus, sang in the girls' sextette and also played a violin in the school orchestra. So you see I really enjoy music very much. Art is pretty much a hobby of mine, too. I keep a scrap book on it. There are always so many festive ideas pictured in the various magazines as well as pretty and clever ideas on how to fix up rooms in your home. I think I would have really enjoyed taking up interior decorating for a career. I like to cook very much. I am always trying out new recipes." (*From a business girl in New York*)

"The wedding was a merry occasion, with 50 guests and the table nicely set with all sorts of dainty foods. When it comes to weddings, we Russians love to serve a lot of pies and hams, fish and other tidbits, together with wines and beer and champagne and fruit. The celebration slated far into the night." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I am 25. I work in a medical laboratory. Before going to work, I leave my daughter at a kindergarten where she is taught and fed, and after working hours, I fetch her home. For the summer all the children were

taken to a summer camp in the country where they picked up wonderfully and got beautifully tanned. My husband is a foreman in a factory and in the evenings plays the tuba in an amateur jazz band. I often go to dances when he plays. We had a great gala celebration on September 7th—the 800th Anniversary of Moscow. I went to an all-night ball where my husband's band played. I can't even tell you how beautiful was the ball, what a lovely time and what fun we had! That was the way Moscovites honored their beautiful city's birthday. All the city was illuminated and decked in flowers and green wreaths as is meant on a birthday." (*From a medical laboratory worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I do almost all my own sewing, like to knit, crochet, and all kinds of handiwork, but with the work a woman has on a farm, together with caring for a family, gardening, canning, and all the necessities of living, I don't find much time for handiwork.

"My husband has a license to pilot a small one-motor plane. Only two adults can ride at a time, but we enjoy frequent rides and our little girl is very fond of flying.

"My education after high school was in a small church college and some summer school in a State Teacher's College. I hope this gives you some idea of my interests." (*From a former school teacher in Iowa*)

"I often go to the Writer's Club where authors and critics gather to discuss new books or to debate the merits and shortcomings of our literature. Our club members, as well as our press, frequently argue over points of principle concerning methods of Soviet art and the employment of artistic means for the sake of achieving truthfulness in Soviet literary works." (*From a cinematographer in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Thank you for the dress styles. I liked two of them very much, the others I found quite simple. For the wedding, I made a very nice suit for myself that does me credit and—so they say—makes me look younger. At 47 one wants to be a little younger, doesn't one? But I don't care for long dresses and in this I do not keep up with the fashions." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I am fond of cooking and said to be a good cook. If you care to have them, I can send you recipes of Russian, Ukrainian, Siberian, Georgian, Tartar and Uzbek dishes. I am also fond of doing embroidery. I am just finishing a cushion cover in Richelieu stitch in a very lovely pattern from the Vladimir region. But I will tell you more about all this in my next letter." (*From a choir-leader in the U.S.S.R.*)

Peace

"I told you that I am an old woman of 75, who has lived through three wars and who heard much from my parents about the American Civil War. So you can understand how anxious I am that all women should try to bring peace to the world, instead of war.

"Yesterday was a national holiday of remembrance of those who sacrificed their lives to make a better world. We put flowers on their graves but how much better it would be if we could save the young men of the future from the necessity of sacrificing their lives in war. Let us all unite to do that—Russians, Americans, Chinese, everybody!" (*From a housewife in New Jersey*)

"It will be a great thing if American women unite their efforts with ours in the struggle for peace. I don't know anything about you, who you are, how old you are, if you have a family or not. But I know you want peace and that is enough for me to feel you are my friend." (*From an assistant garage manager in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I was so happy to receive a letter from you. I will read it to the women of our Methodist Church and I know they will be so pleased to learn of the fine work you are doing among your people. We are all praying for the time when all nations will be so organized that they will be peaceful. We will be so pleased to hear from you again." (*From a church-woman in California*)

"You ask us to consider you one of the members of the effort for world peace. We are very happy to find that we have fellow fighters in the cause of world peace. Every war, whatever its cause, brings nothing but devastation, loss of those near and dear, relatives and friends. How many widows and orphans have been left desolate by the war! How many fathers and mothers have lost their sons and daughters, strong, healthy, talented young people! And what for? How many people have been left hungry and without a roof over their heads! Oceans of blood and tears have been shed—that's what war means. I have lost one dear brother, my niece's husband and a cousin; one of my relatives starved to death during the siege of Leningrad. My husband has returned from the war with shattered health." (*From a school administrator in the U.S.S.R.*)

"It is my hope that some day soon the nations on our earth will know each other better and will be able to live in peace together. If only we common people could know each other. I feel sure we would not have the fear that we know in the world today. We do not wish for war." (*From a housewife in Ohio*)

"So that our letters should not be so few and far between, I want to ask you to write without waiting for an answer. Now when we have begun to know each other better we will never be short of subjects, don't you think so? I often read passages from your letters to my friends. We all have a lively interest in everything that goes on in the world and in the U.S.A. in particular, and, like you, our greatest wish is world peace, so that mankind could go on peacefully to further progress." (*From a housewife in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I have just returned from a meeting of our women's study club where I shared your letter with them. They were interested in hearing from a Soviet neighbor. Our theme this year for our study is 'Peaceful Adjustments for One World,' so you see that we are trying in our own way to promote peace in every possible way." (*From a churchwoman and housewife in Kansas*)

"As a friendly gesture our Club is writing this letter in the hope it will establish contact between our women and yours, looking toward a better understanding and a peaceful world. We are all vitally interested in helping to bring about a lasting peace." (*From a clubwoman in Minnesota*)

"I was extremely glad to receive a letter from a woman from far-off America. In your letter I found the expression of my own hopes—to see the world grow to be a more happy and friendly place. Our women now dream of a future without wars that break up their families and leave them bereaved." (*From a hosiery worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"I am glad you want to be friends with my country because this is what I want, too. I pray every night for no more wars and a better understanding between the United States and other countries. I am a good deal older than you but not too old to be interested in everything that helps build a better world." (*From a housewife in Connecticut*)

"Your letter came just as we were having dinner. All my family were very pleased with it. While we were discussing it my children asked: 'Why doesn't America want to be friends with us?' and my son Volodya, who is eight, said: 'It is very bad if there is another war. All our daddies will have to go to fight and we will again be left without daddies.' I had to give him quite a lecture that both the Soviet and American people don't want to fight. So you see this is how we discussed your letter in our family circle." (*From a laboratory worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"Our deeper currents of human life flow together and there is a real union of the race of man below the surface. We little people realize that

there are no sides any more. For example, I feel an immense unity with you just from the contents of your letters and from seeing the picture of your daughter." (*From a housewife in Missouri*)

"I believe that the more truth our two great countries know about each other, the faster will be the friendship between the common people of both countries, and the more difficult it will be for those who try to poison our friendship by representing the Russians and their ideals as being hostile to the people of the U.S.A." (*From a motion picture research worker in the U.S.S.R.*)

"You are right in saying that all women are anxious to have peace. This is what the peoples of our land are thinking and saying. Peace and nothing but peace the world over. This is our common wish and our common task, which we Russian women have set for ourselves.

"It is so joyful to learn that we are not alone, that the women of America share this common longing with us." (*From a sound transcription production worker in the U.S.S.R.*)



