

My Dears,

I don't want to personalize this letter firstly because of the sad experience with a previous personalized letter, and secondly because it is for everybody who is interested, though you will notice that some parts are internally directed to different people – personally.

It is difficult to begin, and it will probably be difficult to write because writing letters is like cleaning your home – if you do it regularly, it is not a difficult task and can be done quickly, but if you let it accumulate, you will get exhausted trying to catch up, but still there will be more things to do and every process becomes problematic.

I am very happy to receive news from you. Thank you so much to everyone who wrote. You cannot imagine what a joy it is to get even a line from you. I did not send a postcard for New Year because the suggestion to send it came so late that there was no way it would reach you before New Year. This letter is instead of that postcard. I didn't reply to several letters because there was no "channel" to send them, and what can you send through regular mail? Plus, I don't know how / and therefore don't like writing letters: "Not everything can be said in letters / And not everything can be heard, / In letters we always think / We'll be misunderstood."¹ This is about me. I know that I should write about how I'm living here and everything from my point of view. But how does one write about this? Would it not look like putting myself forward? I really wouldn't want that. Or like boasting? That would be even worse. If I were to talk about it in person, I am sure that it would not sound like I'm praising myself or putting anyone else down. But in letters it might sound that way. I beg you – try to read it with trust in the fact that I don't want it to appear this way, just everything looks very categorical on paper, sharper than in conversation, not to mention in my thoughts. But dear F. is right: when will we ever meet? I must write. If only I were able to do it like she does, or L. – when I read their letters, I see both of them as if they were standing in front of me. And Kroshka,² too. I dream about seeing all of you here. Not because emigration is such a great thing. On the contrary, it turned out to be quite a difficult trial. Even some people who bore with dignity the trial of the camps were not able to endure emigration. But I know that all of the people to whom this letter is addressed would be able to do it, because each of you has a personal harbor – this makes the difference between enduring and not. It seems I found my harbor here, and this saved me. It is amazing, but I realized myself here as a specialist. At home, very few people remembered, myself included, that I am a historian. But here I suddenly became one. Or perhaps not suddenly, but I did not notice when the change took place. Here is how it happened. In the summer of '78, the Amalriks came to visit us. Andrey brought a book of his recollections – back then it was a manuscript. He told me: "Could you check the facts, make sure I didn't mix up the years and events, etc." I read it and got upset at his perspective. I love Andrey, but this was in his book. His model of the world was as follows: he is in the center, and everybody else is on the periphery around him, including

¹ Quote from a poem by Konstantin Simonov

² An endearing nickname, akin to "baby" or "cutie pie."

Yura. This is not because Andrey envisioned it like this, but the format dictated it. At first I thought, I won't say anything, after all he asked me to check the facts only, he won't change the perspective, and we will only get into an argument. But I could not restrain myself. I started making individual observations, but got worked up and told him everything. We did have an argument. He yelled, "These are my memories, this is how I knew it. If you know it another way, why don't you write about it." He said it in such a way that it was clear he knew I would not write. I hadn't written anything until then, after all. His book came out in Russian already after his tragic death. I was bawling when I read it: he corrected all the things I had yelled at him about. We saw each other only a few times after that argument, and he never said a word about it. But he re-read his work and understood that the format had taken him too far. He loved Yura and knew that I love them both, and he believed me that it came off not how it really was. But it stuck with me that Andrey's book will come out and Yura's role will be diminished in it. I decided that I must write what I know, and before Andrey's book comes out, so by the time it does, there would already be a different framework. I wrote it for "Continent," I know that Kroshka read it. Then, under that momentum, I put together a collection of documents called "The Orlov Case," I don't know if it reached you. It is a collection of documents, but it gave me some experience working with a large amount of material – selection, arrangement, etc. Then I was asked to write a short guide on Soviet affairs for the people who would play a real role in Carter's foreign policy with regard to [missing line].

In addition to my regular job at the radio, I worked on a string of projects. In the summer of 198- [unclear text] I worked on the collective public action in the USSR: demonstrations and rallies, strikes, riots and unrest during the 1953-1983 period. This topic came to me by chance, I didn't really want to take it on – first of all because it is not my thing, and secondly because I had just finished working on the English edition of the book, for which I wrote additional chapters: "Latvia" (there was enough material), "Socialists" (I didn't include them in the book initially because I thought they were extinct in Russia, but they came back to life and I had to describe everything from the beginning), and what happens after human rights activists are crushed in Moscow and the provinces. I planned to do some house repairs this summer and to go on vacation. After all, we have the opportunity to see the world, but we barely use it because we are always busy. But I had to take on the project, and it turned out to be very interesting, especially the strikes. But more about this next time. Right now I'm working on a report on the situation at the radio stations broadcasting in the USSR from the U.S. I kept bugging various people about what's going on at the radio, and finally, it worked – the American Helsinki Group started working on it, and to do something I am supposed to make a report about the problems. I have three months to do it. The plan is as follows: to read through a few months of broadcasts from three-four programs on Voice of America and Radio Free Europe – not the informational programs, but the "conceptual" ones so to speak, to figure out what concepts and what set of ideas they are presenting to the hypothetical listener that listens to these programs on a regular basis. Knowing these programs and their creators, I already know the answer. They promote nationalist-authoritarian ideas, which are by no means the ideals for which these stations were

created and maintained by Congress. But “the cadres decide everything,” and the cadres are prescribed from Vermont or from the Continent. Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and within their limits, a national ethos. Though this mostly related to the directives from Vermont. Paris does not ask for ideological purity, just personal loyalty, which includes the choice of friends: one cannot be friends with people whom V.M. and V.B. don’t like. Because they distribute the positions and control the Russian-language press, the rest of the people are a minority and on the losing side. But why are the “cadres” imposed by people who seemingly would not find sympathy in the free world? One intelligent American answered my question like this: “We understand the difference between them and you. It’s like the difference between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. You are honest people and we like you. But they are more successful precisely because of their unscrupulous methods. That is why the Administration focuses on them.” But there is a way to check the Administration here – through social control. In this case, it is the Helsinki Groups, so I got on their case. It took them three years to get moving. It will probably take just as long before we see results. But if we don’t quit because of the slow pace, we might be successful. Partially. All our life is a struggle. I keep up the struggle on the radio. We cannot have a separate radio, so we stick to our guns. In everything else, I don’t want to spend my time and thoughts on it. Because if I do, it will suck me in and I won’t have any energy left for anything else. You just have to do your job without paying attention to the actions of those who disagree with you. The “Mensheviks” have had some successes too. The journal “Forum” has been coming out since 1982. Since 1984 – “The Country and the World.” Since 1981 – “Problems of Eastern Europe.” But their materials are not broadcast on the radio. My goal is to make sure that they will be. There is selectiveness in book publishing, too. There was an excellent book on Don Quixote by Eichenwald. But Lubarsky was the editor. He is not liked in Vermont because he is a democrat, and not liked in Paris because he is not their puppet. This is enough not only to silence the “News from the USSR” (they are completely banned on Radio Free Europe), but Don Quixote as well. Everything comes down to radio. I am working to get three programs: “Democracy in action” (now hosted by Borya Shragin), “Nationalities issues” and “Russian Book in America” (these don’t exist yet). I also managed to expand the program “Human Rights” from once a week to five times a week.

[Missing line] the creation of the International Committee of Helsinki Groups was announced on the day when the Moscow Helsinki Group announced the termination of its work. The Helsinki movement in the West did not become widespread, like the peace movement for example. But what we do have is the union of intellectual elites in different countries. This became very clear during A.D. and L.’s first hunger strike – we were able to work together. But so far, strong measures like a hunger strike are necessary to get this community moving.

But the network exists, so when relations with the USSR are revived, it should become apparent. For right now they want to work with countries where there is real hope for success. They work with Romania, Poland, Central and South America, Turkey, and with the USSR on the peace movement. This is also necessary. But I try to make sure they at least don’t forget the

people who are imprisoned right now, and radio for those who are not. Of course I'd like the Helsinki Groups to be more active. But to liquidate these groups only because the USSR does not fulfill the Helsinki Accords is silly and criminal, because what agreements does the USSR fulfill? And would the USSR carry out its human rights obligations better if the Helsinki Accords were annulled? It took so many years to build this network. Now we should activate them, not liquidate them when we have nothing else to replace them, except perhaps the International resistance. In general, the very idea of working not to create something, but to destroy ones' competitor is depressing to me.

F. asked if we have cats. We do. Four. Two males and two females. We live in a house in the middle of the woods, with windows close to the ground. One window is the cats' door. It is right above the ground and there is always an opening for them to get in. Right by the window we have our dining table, which we use when we have guests. We had guests yesterday, and at that precise moment our cat Murka showed up at the window with a mouse in her teeth (a forest mouse). We live a very rustic lifestyle. Squirrels run around the property, dogs walk around. On weekdays we hear the sounds of students in the distance (this is a school campus). It's a 30 minute walk to the train station. The ride to downtown New York is 50 minutes. I go there once a week for the radio. Kolya goes once a month to visit the bookstores and his friends. We almost never visit friends, even Litvinovs we see rarely (Kolya sees Pasha at work). Kolya says that I am a "workaholic," from the word "to work." I really do work morning till night. Not only because there is so much work, but also because the work is interesting, and there is nothing else to do here. The house needs to be cleaned, but because there are only two of us, it's not hard. We get prepared meals from the school, they are pretty good. We have a washing machine for the laundry. In a word, chores take very little time. The only thing I should be doing is improving my English. But while I was writing the book I didn't have the time or the energy. It's a whole restructuring of one's way to thinking – from reading and writing in Russian about Russian issues to something else. Somehow I picked up some English out of the atmosphere and started speaking, although poorly, but people can understand me and I even give lectures in English (with a great deal of preparation, of course, but even in Russian one needs to prepare, though much less). I have some difficulty understanding, I still don't understand some people and some things that are being said. I started taking private lessons last fall, but I have no time to do the assignments, so my learning is limited to the lessons themselves. I hope that after the report about the radio I won't take on any more projects and will concentrate on learning the language.

In the summer of 1983 we traveled across America for the first time. Until then I have been to Europe every year in different countries, but I would do my business there and immediately go home. I did not see anything. You wouldn't believe it – I didn't want to. I was in shock when I left [the Soviet Union]. It hadn't been two weeks from the day when Yura was arrested before my eyes. I couldn't be a tourist. Not because I did not allow myself, but my heart was somehow numbed to it. After six years, I finally wanted to for the first time, and we traveled around the places described in [Ilf and Petrov's] *Single-Storey America*. That book once formed

our ideas about this country. I wanted to check what corresponded to reality, and what didn't. We flew to Montana, and from there took a car and drove through Yellowstone National Park to the Grand Canyon and the Arizona desert to Las Vegas. From there we flew to San Francisco, then to San Diego, which is almost on the border with Mexico. America has changed less over the years than the Soviet Union, in the sense [missing lines and page].