Dear Friends:

It is difficult to describe what a breath of Finnish air does for the soul. One has to be exposed to what we have experienced for the past ten days to fully appreciate it. When we stopped from the Russian plane in Helsinki early this P.M., something like an albatross was lifted from our hearts and we felt free. Others mentioned it spontaneously.

As many of you who have our itinerary know, this A.M. was our 11th day in the U.S.S.R.—incidentally my birthday in Leningrad and now in Helsinki. I cannot imagine two more interesting places to spend a birthday unless it is in the comfort of home. It has been a provocative ten days—we have tried to meet the people, see their country, observe their ways of life and study their culture. We have tried to stay away from polotics and propaganda and to save our observations for further and more studied interpretation. Many things about it are too overwhelming and confusing to attempt it here. I will try to tell you what we did and saw.

We left the relative luxury of Vienna for Kiev, landing, I guess, with a certain amount of anxiety. Like other Americans we did not know what to expect. This anxiety was rapidly dispelled and on leaving we have no feeling of fear, surveillance or related discomfort. We have, particularly in these last days, felt entirely comfortable. If Americans behave themselves and do not provoke suspicion, I really do not believe there is anything to be afraid of. The same is not true of our Embassy personnel who are constantly followed and our doctor friends in the Embassy were literally followed by car from Moscow to Leningrad, some 500 miles, by three men and were kept under constant surveillance while in Leningrad.

As far as our physical well being is concerned, we have lived well on the Intourist plan, deluxe, which is about the only way an American can travel. The cities are really international, perhaps like New York, with every imaginable race, color, type of dress and custom all in the same hotel, dining room, bus and public place. This would include hundreds of Korean (North), Chinese, Mongolian and Africans, for instance—many in uniform. A scattering of Americans but certainly a minority group.

The food in most hotels and restaurants is truly remarkably good and it is being enjoyed by everyone, whether he has ruples or Intourist coupons. Caviar, champagne, as indicative of the capitalist world, are cheaper and much more readily available than we have been accustomed to any place. The menus are varied, a little tiresome because it is not a good place to experiment with the Russian language, but the food, its preparation, is good to occasionally tasty and I would have to admit at reasonable prices. Lunch yesterday, for instance, for three (our guide)
with crab salad, lettuce, cucumber and tomatoe salad, bread, but-
ter, Chicken à la Kiev, and a beef kabob of some kind with Vodka
and wine was $7.35 our money. This included a tip which I did not
give lest it not be accepted. This habit is unpredictable but a
little embarrassing when returned or refused, as happened to us.
Dinner for two with full courses and wine might cost $7.00 or we
entertained a Russian Professor the other night at a fine Georgian
restaurant with champagne and all the trimmings and music, price
about $15.00. If this sounds extravagant, it is, but you are hook-
ed. You are given so many coupons on entrance and you have a hard
time spending them. Since they are not returnable for rebate and
you cannot purchase caviar this year as in the past, except with
American dollars--so you overeat, live it up--and that is the
cuisine picture. The dining room service is about as bad as can
be imagined. Dirty table clothes--rude head waiters and 99.9%
Russian speaking waiters who are unkempt and difficult. Slow is
hardly the word. It would not be unusual to sit down and wait 30
minutes for a menu. This would be followed by one hour to be
served and another 30 minutes to get a check. 1½-2 hours would be
par for the course to have luncheon--a little longer for dinner.
There are only rare exceptions to this.

Let me go rapidly to another side of the coin. By the way,
Margaret does not always agree with me, and that is why consider-
able interpretation will have to await our own crystallization of
ideas. Nevertheless, the chief characteristics of the Russian
people in 1962, their clothes, institutions, hotel rooms, lobbies--
everything you see is their shabbiness. It gets a little better
as you go north but not much. For instance, in Kiev we stayed in
a hotel opened two months--8nbelievable after you stepped inside.
In Moscow our hotel (10 years old) was 30 stories high and 1000
rooms.of shabbiness including a door knob which came off every
time you touched it and a toilet seat of light plastic which was
Cracked on both sides--one side completely,barely holding to-
gether. The clothes, shoes, hair cuts, waiters, anything you see
just is shabby. Our hotel in Leningrad was admittedly old but it
is five stories of shabby marble, velvet and old lace. This
leads me to another descriptive word, i.e. facade. New Buildings,
plumbing goods, most everything which looks nice at first has very
thin veneer. As Saroyan character in "The Time of Your Life" kept
repeating, "No foundation".

It is difficult to change national character with ideology
and we have come to believe that the rank and file Russian, the
people in villages and most of the workers desire peace as much as
we do. As you know, they are not all Communists, although they
may aspire. It is the 10% which represent their leaders who are
the bad actors because they are dedicated and with religious zeal.

There are at least two types of Russians whom we have ob-
served--we like the smiling ones--the rude ones are absolutely
impossible but I must not give the impression that these are in
the majority. Perhaps one's impressions are determined by the
image created by guides who are assigned by Intourist and we had
excellent ones. The Intourist bureaucracy is very spotty with
some real rude people--others attempt to be helpful but they put repeated obstructions in your way which is endlessly aggravating. Our Kiev guide was a mature, well-spoken Russian woman of 35 with two children and whose husband was an engineer. In Moscow a young girl (Tamara) in her fourth college year as an English major and in Leningrad (Lucy) who had just graduated in Philology English major and who next year will serve the Neurosurgical Institute as an English interpreter and translator for journals, new books, etc. All were superior with little propaganda except where it was necessary because of relating the historical facts. They were all, of course, dedicated to their way of life and full of rationalization for its obvious gray areas or deficiencies. To two of these girls I volunteered that "you have been kind, helpful and informative, but is there anything you would like to know about our country?" We had observed that although we opened the door there never was any such curiosity. The following answer was interesting. It was that they meet so many tourists, read so much about America, listen to its music, study its culture, read its history, literature and poetry that there are few questions which they can think of to ask. I got the impression that there is an element of truth in this. Certainly, Lucy knew all the words to "Mac The Knife" and liked Ella Fitzgerald's version of it better than Louis Armstrong's. I would not want to challenge her on contemporary literature, history or art. Her English accent almost perfect acquired by the aid of her own tape recorder. Their English vocabulary has limitations but so does mine.

So much for general impressions.

Kiev by the Dnieper is characterized by its broad streets, gardens and parks, beautifully landscaped, new appearing buildings made possible by complete wartime destruction, poor little sidewalk shops with scanty and shabby consumer goods. Incidentally, their streets are clean--cleaner than Chicago, New York or Nashville--kept so by old women and wash trucks. There is a current Russian story about two little crying boys who were lonesome; on questioning, the reason: Their father is a cosmanaut and has been in orbit two days and their mother has been 15 hours in a meat queue. They seem to take considerable pride in their public places and keep them up well. Their own homes, initially of poor construction although new, are allowed to deteriorate--nobody owns them, so why do anything about it. The public places belong to them all. At least that is my observation and interpretation. The observation is accurate.

Moscow on the other hand, is characterized by extensive efforts to improve the housing. Literally hundreds of new apartment houses, large with excellent planning of playgrounds in back--broad streets with parks on either side and in the middle. Of course, when you get in the older part of town housing is poor, crowded but there is evidence of desire and plans to improve this life. The new apartments are crowded with 2-3 beds in one room. We got into the country 30-40 miles and even here new housing was going up. There was evidence of electricity and even television
How do the Russian people have money to go to all these places (the tickets are about $2 each) we asked. How can they eat in the same crowded restaurants that we do—and eat and drink well? The only answer I could obtain was "somehow" but when pushed further it is true that rent is very cheap, like $12 a month. Subway fare is 4 Kopeks = 5 cents, no income tax and very low utility costs. Nevertheless their standard of living has deteriorated in

The Kremlin and Red Square is impressive all right—particularly so in the quiet of midnight—excellent lighting there. Further description will have to await our photographic efforts and other interpretation. We waited in line at least 3/4 mile long to view Lenin's tomb and as we walked just behind it there was Stalin's without marker or inscription, and almost alongside John Reid and a dozen others. We felt free enough to talk to Tamara about this who admitted they have a little difficulty accepting this. She had it rationalized, however, because of Stalin's 'errors' particularly in agriculture, and his lack of preparation for the invasion of the "German Fascists". My observation that such ignominy could happen to other contemporary leaders precipitated no comment. Perhaps John Reid is better off—he at least left some beautiful poetry.

Leningrad is nice—the climate lousy. It rained every day and the temperature was 43-58°F—a welcome relief for us after our summer clothes, so necessary for four months, and now a little light—sweaters and knit suits being in order. Canals, islands, wide streets, also much new housing and a subway like Moscow with ornate stations—nice but overly decorated with mosaic and statuary. The ones in Kiev are new and in better taste in my judgment. It is a poor way to spend money but again it was part of the show "look what we have done in ten years"—for the benefit of foreign guests from the East and Africa.

The Winter Palace—the Hermitage—in Leningrad is full of beautiful things by Leonardo De Vinci, Rafael, Rembrandt, Van Gogh and a host of others—a fine museum of national treasure all displayed under very shabby circumstances with thousands of shabby country people truly enjoying it.

Now let me round up some loose ends. We went to four types of entertainment. The Ballet was beautiful. They did Esmeralda, which I did not know, and not by their leading company but it was superior. Both male and female dancers were outstanding. We went to the puppet show which was the best evening I have spent—belly laughs with clever parody of coloratura soprano and jazz singers—orchestra leaders—magicians. You get so interested in the illusion that in the finale when they, the puppeteers exposed themselves they looked like giants—remarkably talented people. The Chinese circus was also excellent. We went to a variety show which turned out badly but it was for country people and we were especially lost.

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the past 2-3 years apparently as income is fixed they have infla-
tion too and so much of their effort is going into munitions and
missiles.

Another observation may have its encouraging aspects, hopefully
be their undoing or might even be an indication of basic loss of
freedom or national unhappiness. Alcoholism is very common and I
cannot recall when I have seen more drunks passed out or stagger-
ing home than in Russia, unless it was the lumberjacks on 2nd Street
in old time Eureka. Bob Quinn will interpret this for anyone in-
terested.

I had a pretty good chance to see their Pediatrics. It was
hard work but I stuck to it and armed with a letter from Albert
Sabin I had an excellent visit with Professor Chumakov, Head of
the Virus Research and maker of the live virus vaccine. Inci-
dental! Intelligence would indicate that the prevalence is down
again this year in the U.S.S.R. although a little higher than last
year. They seemed to be slackening their enthusiasm, mostly be-
cause of the SV40 virus contaminants which they think is carcino-
genic. I had dinner in the Director's home with his family—a rare
thing for an American. He almost killed me but I assure you that
in the toasting I drank less than the did, which was a lot, but I
could not let American prestige suffer in this way. How many times
we toasted live virus vaccine, the elimination of polio, Albert
Sabin, peace, friendship and I always inserted "freedom", which the
interpreter eliminated, I believe. Then we did freedom, peace,
friendship and international cooperation. This went on for a
frightening time. I was driven in his car to my hotel and then
went to dinner with Margaret. All I know was that he was not in
his office the next day and did not accept my invitation the next
night. Mrs. Chumakev is also a physician and I believe in charge
of the institute which makes D.P.T., or its vaccine equivalents.
He turned his Russian interpreter, Miss Bala Kaplan, over to me
and the next day we went at his arrangement to the Pediatric In-
stitute and I had a personally conducted tour with the Director
whose impossible name is Studenkin Mitrophan Yakouvelrich, member
of their Academy of Medical Science U.S.S.R. There are over 1000
people on the staff with 30 senior scientists—large. I have a
good idea of training, care, equipment, postgraduate education for
pediatricians in the U.S.S.R. This would take a complete letter
and would be of little interest to many who will read this. For
those interested, staff and students, I will try to recapture it
for them later. I felt pretty good about getting as much as I did.
Could I summarize again "No foundation".

In Leningrad I went to the Institute of Evolutionary Physiol-
ogy. Had a couple of hours with the Director. Here is what we
could call Experimental Psychology and is the laboratory where
Pavlov did his early conditioned reflex experiments. Nothing out-
standing but a 12-channel EEG not in use! Many experiments on
establishment of conditioned reflexes in animals and babies.
I had an hour and a half with Professor Lubov, Director of the Institute for Infectious Diseases in Children. Here antibiotics are studied and tried. Their latest is Canomycin, as nearly as I could tell. Problems of staphylococcus, hepatitis, pathogenic B. coli, aseptic meningitis are being studied in about ten subdivision of this institute with patients and a staff of 300.

I must end this somewhere, although you can see I am full of it, but I must mention the language barrier. It is most unfortunate we felt that had we been able to talk directly we could have learned much more and it is inestimable what we might have accomplished (in our small way) in improving international relations.

It was all a most interesting period. Another trip that we would not do readily again, although we have three more days in Czechoslovakia. Margaret thinks we should not press our luck but it is prepaid and not refundable. I am Scotch enough not to want to give them $100.00. Everyone says it is much better there and Prague is a beautiful European city. I hope you will see why we are enjoying the freedom of Finland, whose people have more reason to fear and hate the Russians than we do.

I had a great day to day with Professor Yilpo whom I met first in New York at my Histo exhibit at the 1947 International Congress. Now retired but active. Then to the Children's Hospital and Children's Castle with him. Top-flight in every way and by rigid American standards.

We leave in the morning to visit our good friend, Dr. Wallgren. We are well--a little tired and looking forward to our planned rest in Switzerland before the meeting of the 1962 International Congress in Lisbon. It would be untrue to say that we are not counting the weeks and days until our return home.

Sincerely yours,

A.C.

P.S. We were in Leningrad when they put up their Sputniks. There was great interest, celebration, rejoicing and I must say it was impressive. We are uninformed here but they told us in U.S.S.R. that they were aiming for five at once.