

August 16, 1977

Dear Sylvia and Dear Bob!

Please forgive me for taking so long to answer and for writing in Russian. The main explanation is that we were away. The second is that the people who might have been able to translate my letter were away on holiday and if I wait for them, then the letter will be delayed indefinitely.

We also left "to unwind," although we do not work and we do not need to unwind from anything. But it is very hard to sit around all summer in the big city: it is hot, dusty, and noisy. This year we have not been lucky with a summer place. We were near Leningrad in Pushkin. Two of Victor's nieces* live there, with whom we have excellent relationships. Everything would have been good, but it rained every day. We got so sick of this that we decided to return earlier than planned.

Sylvia, when I read your letter, I was very surprised that a travel voucher that includes transportation, food, and excursions is cheaper than just a round-trip ticket. Or am I mistaken?

Of course I know about Watergate. I know about it from our newspapers and magazines. I think that it must have been both interesting and flattering for Richard** to take part in the group investigating a case being broadcast to the whole work.

Bob, there is huge demand for books here, and it is not so simple to buy them. It is unlikely that Sylvia will be able to get them during the few days she will be in

* She is referring to Lena and Mila. She did not mention that they were also her relatives (on her mother's side).

** Richard Weinberg, Bob's older brother, was a member of the special prosecution team in the Watergate case.

Moscow and Leningrad. There are three big bookstores not far from our house. If I can have a list of the books you need, I will be able to drop by periodically and secure them gradually. Don't worry – for us this is not hard and it is quite doable.

You ask to describe our apartment. By all means. You have been in Moscow, and perhaps you remember the area of the new university in the Lenin hills. We live not far from there. It is a relatively new region (they started building in the 1950s) with broad, tree-lined streets that, unfortunately, get noisier by the year because of increasing traffic. We live on the second floor of a 13-storey building. Our apartment has two rooms (around 20x15 square meters), a kitchen of around 10 square meters, a big open corridor, and a lot of extra space (a mezzanine, closets). Although we live in a new region, our house is neither standard nor government. It is one of the first cooperatives. Construction began in the mid 1950s, before the construction of mass cooperatives. We paid for our apartment over the span of 15 years. At the official rate, it is around 10,000 dollars [sic]. We have the right to bequeath this money, but we can neither sell nor bequeath the apartment. The cooperative charter forbids this.

The majority of residents in cities live in apartments that belong to the government.

What would I like to know? In general, the same as you would – how you live, how you work, and how you relax. Unfortunately, we know very little about each other. And it is true that what we learn from the news is rather subject to different interpretations.

I will soon send you two books. One is for Bob: *The History of Trade Unions in the USSR*, part one (1905-1937). It is not clear to me whether the second part has been published. It, of course, is very basic and like any political literature it is tendentious, but perhaps it will nevertheless be of some use. The second book – *The City of Pushkin* – is for both of you. I hope it will give you some impression of the places we have recently been.

Regards to all from Victor and me.

Your Sara

P.S. I am sending the books by airmail today.