

Letter # 6
Karpowka
March 23, 1929

Dear Brother and Sister, will try to send a sign of life from us. Wish you God's blessings and peace. Praise and thanks to God, we are again on the road to health. Since before Christmas this year I have not been well. Actually, before Christmas I didn't really think I was especially sick, but I lost quite a bit of blood and lost strength, but I had no pain. Until Christmas I got around though, but during the holidays I couldn't go out. Then I became a bit worried, what was this? The day after Christmas, therefore, we went to Halbstadt, and when the doctor examined me he said immediately that I needed an operation, a difficult, serious operation, with no time to wait; namely, uterine cancer. Was to stay right there then, but I couldn't decide, so we went home. This was Friday, and on Monday, New Year's Eve, my husband took me in. I underwent the operation on Thursday, January 3. This was followed by very tough days, initially with little hope. But this was precisely the time of our prayer week, in which a lot of prayers were offered for us.

We believe that my still being here is an answer to prayer. That's also what one of our sisters said to me: It's probably an answer to prayer that you came through this. My dear husband was able to stay with me for ten days, day and night. Dear Sister, how shocked I was when the doctor said, "You have cancer." That was the last thing I had considered because I had no pain. I have far more pain now than I did before. May our heavenly father give grace that the illness stays away! We must also say that the Lord has brought us thus far, thus far has helped us, through all the difficult hours in which I couldn't even pray, but that is the most difficult. But the Lord did not take note of my weakness, was gracious to me. May we therefore not forget what great things he has done for us. I was in the hospital for three weeks, and then lay in bed for three more weeks at home. But now I am up and about much more. I still can't work, but I can knit and mend, which I do, and my appetite has improved. I could hardly eat anything in the first six weeks.

Now we would really wish that we could come over there where you are, but for that the Lord must pave the way. If He wants that, then human persons will want that as well. At the moment, there are still no prospects, and we haven't begun with anything.

Here we have a very hungry time again. (original ??) In many places there is no bread, nor heat and feed. We are well into March now, and spring doesn't want to arrive. But it probably won't be as bad as it was during the years of starvation since at least corn is available, and barley. We eat a combination of simple flour and corn and barley meal. In the fall we bought wheat, about 26 Pud (1 Pud = 16 kg) and 5 Pud flour. But we want to use some of that for seed. The winter wheat will probably have suffered a lot as well. We bought 50 Pud of barley to eat and for seed. We had a [fair crop] of corn, so we had feed for the cow. There is a shortage of feed in the villages of Kleefeld and Alexanderkron and in the new settlements. You should come here once, you would be amazed at all the new villages, one village next to the other, through the whole colony, and the German villages continue to (grow ?).

(Transcription: Whether this is a continuation of the letter, I don't know)

At Arends things have changed as well. The grandmother died on February 25, and was buried on the 28th. She was 80 years of age, and a few months. Right on Christmas Eve the Lord gave (Liesa?) a dead little daughter, which they named Anna. The other four girls are healthy. Dear Sister, you would be happy if you once heard them sing; those Arends have wonderful, lively learners. Mrs. John Dük is still alive and as healthy as one is in old age. Mrs. Peter Mathies had a stroke three weeks ago. She has lost

her speech entirely, and understands only a little, just the simplest matters. The doctor offers little hope. The Mathieses had gone shopping in Rückenau, and she suffered her stroke on the return trip.

March 26

Last night we had no frost. The first night this year. May now we'll move into spring. Dear Sister, I would love to see you again, know what you're busy with. Are your daughters earning something, or are they at home with you? Are you in good health, still a bit chubby? If that's God's will, I might gain back my strength again. We'll probably have to send this letter to L. Bärge first, we can't find your address.

[Continuation?]

Here we live at a time that a pen cannot describe. Dear siblings, you can't imagine what's happening here. On February 28th here there were resettlements, Peter Wiebe and Heinrich Sperling were among them. The whole family had to leave. Among the Russians, women had to leave, with children 4 months old, and it was cold, 35 degrees. A number of children froze to death. We were also at Peter Wiebes as they left. I believe there was no dry eye, everybody wept. Wiebe asked us to send you hearty greetings, and that they would write to let you know how they were getting along. They have already written. They are supposed to go beyond Tara. They could take bread for a month. Peters' half-brother with his family came here November 14. They had three children, and stayed until January 14. Abram Hüberts dropped in on December 24, with yours and the Düks together, home, to Barnaul. Had 2 children. The oldest daughter had become sick in Moscow. She died after they had been home for 2 weeks. They wouldn't let them travel on. They had enough to eat, their own food, but the Abram Hüberts experienced everything during their three months in Moscow. We still have church every Sunday. The preachers are still all at home here with us. In closing, a hearty greeting.

Since my wife has already written about all the news here, I won't write a lot more. But this, brother-in-law, I will report, you can be glad that you're over there. You won the good lot, since here the people are forced into poverty. He who has 15 . . . a kulak is loaded down individually with taxes [Nalog] up to 100 rubles. Desjatin . . . 500 rubles. How can one live like that! Brother-in-law, I won't write too much, you can read between the lines three times over. You write about the papers. . . (Mork?), we have those. Would also be ready very quickly, but the passports, those they won't give us. In a week I want to go to Omsk to apply for passports. Whether that will be helpful, that's questionable, but we have to try. On May 22 Jacob Wiebe left for Moscow [?] with everything, but without passports, trying to get them there.

We began seeding here on May 7. What we'll have this year, of course, we don't know. Of course, it's always cold, and a lot of wind. I don't recognize that here. . Deleske had three desjatins of wheat drifted over. The wheat had already sprouted in the ground, so it will probably be lost.

My wife will . . . to write.

Because my husband doesn't know what to write about from Russia, I'll close. Here it snowed heavily May 27th, all day and all night, and froze. So we'll probably get no fruit this year, so we wasted two days of plowing. We still have a day of seeding left, and then we're finished. On Sunday, here, everyone showed up in Tigerweide. Peter Bärge too. Here everyone wants to leave.

Sister-in-law, if you get a lot from your garden, save some seeds for me.

Have to finish with writing here. With greetings, we remain your brother and sister.

Peter and Anna Dück. Good-bye! [Literally, "see you again"]