

Letter # 11

[ A letter from Grandmother Helena's (Barg Family) niece in the Molotschna Colony, present Ukraine ]

Tiegerweide  
February 5, 1933

Dear Uncle and Aunt, first of all, wishing you the best of health in body and soul. Thank the Lord, we are also healthy, just so tired and faint. How long it has been since we've seen any bread!

Loving Uncle Franz and Aunt Lena, we beg you from the bottom of our heart, if you can do this, or in some way find it possible to send us something. If our loving God might lead affairs so that . . . out of your home (?) . . . (?) sadly . . . (?) could send a gift parcel since the people want the dollars, but the flour is so expensive, over 3 rubles per pud [16 kg.]. For you it would probably be easier. Please, please, loving uncle, I'm always back to you. You as the father of a household, you know this the best, whether you can send us anything. Our loving Lord will repay you for it many times over, whatever you can do for us, I wanted to . . . (?) Yes, dear aunt, I often stand and think – we want something to eat. 7 persons at the table, four children, the two of us and Uncle Peter.

The smallest . . . (?) in the morning while it's still totally dark, she's already pleading, "Mama, will I get a piece of bread today?" We've already eaten many a pumpkin, and beets, but when they are all gone, what then . . . (?) May the Lord have mercy on us here in Russia. So many people here wander about and plead for a piece of bread or a piece of pumpkin.

Abraham Töws, you know him, Aunt Lena, he is so swollen, his legs have already split open. Oh how terrible it is to perish from hunger! I can't describe it how terrible everything is. In jail the people sit for weeks without bread, just boiled water. Whoever has anything from home then, like boiled beets . . . (?) then can . . . (?) (The bottom line is illegible).

Now, dear ones, I want to describe our situation. It's been a month since we were classified as Kulaks. Our home is completely empty. Every single piece was noted, and after a few days everything was loaded and taken to Halbstadt. We all lay on the floor, on straw, covered with a thin blanket [Radno\*]. We covered ourselves with our outer clothing, as pitiful as it was. Yes, my beautiful sewing machine, my dresser, linens. . . (?) and everything that I still had from my dear grandparents. I pleaded: just leave something for the children, but no mercy. But the most terrible, as after an hour, all the potatoes, beans, porridge, and flour . . . (?) It was, after all, only cornmeal, threshed and . . . (?) Out of our garden, nothing out of . . . (?) everything done by hand.

Yes, you dear people, I have often thought, if only my children could once go to Mrs. Hübert and to Aunt Brü . . . (?) to eat till they were satisfied!

Dear uncles and aunts, are you really getting no mail from us? I'm now writing for the third time, and no one writes back. Do I have the right address, or am I of no worth to any of you?

Dear Uncle Bernard and Uncle Franz, have mercy on us. I have sent our four girls to Thiessen's boys, they were to . . . (?) To no avail!

Heinrich says I should ask you not to take it negatively from us that we beg for bread. Oh, that hunger hurts so! May the good Lord never allow something like this to happen to you. . . (?)

Now, to conclude, receive our greetings and give our kisses to Heinrich and Elizabeth (Kondradt?)

[ Writer's Identity: Barg family; specific author not identified ]

\*Radno – [Ukrainian] broad, thin blanket used for both bottom sheet and folded over for top sheet. In this situation, it appears the *Radno* may have been used as the bottom sheet only.

