

People's Court Reveals Many Domestic Problems In Russia

(This is the fifth of a series of twelve articles by the author of America's most popular human relations column.)

MOSCOW — "I understand you give advice on domestic problems in American newspapers," said an Intourist representative. "In Russia you would be unemployed. The system takes care of the emotional needs of the people. We are too busy and hard-working to have problems."

I heard a good deal of hogwash while I was in Russia. By all odds, this was the most ridiculous bit of nonsense.

There are plenty of domestic problems in Russia and I spent a session in the People's Court listening to them.

I made three formal requests to visit a Soviet courtroom. Three times I was refused. In desperation I phoned Henry Shapiro of United Press International. Just walk in," Henry advised me. "Russian law guarantees everyone the right to enter the People's Court. Nobody can stop you."

With my sketchy knowledge of Russian how would I understand the proceedings? Eleonora, my interpreter, wouldn't dare accompany me on this excursion. She'd been instructed to tell me the courtroom was out of bounds to tourists.

LAWYER HELPS OUT

I remembered a pleasant gentleman who had occupied the adjoining seat on the Soviet jet from Leningrad to Moscow. We were both stopping at the Ukraine Hotel. His name was Henry Kline and he was a Russian-born American—and a New York lawyer. On the slim chance that he understood Russian and was willing to serve as my interpreter, I issued the invitation.

Kline admitted to a limited knowledge of Russian and agreed to accompany me to the People's Court. He conceded he knew "a little" about Russian law (his cousin in Comsk was an attorney and they had compared notes just last week).

At 10:00 the next morning Kline

Thanksgiving Service Set By Church

Thanksgiving service at the Presbyterian Church was the topic for planning at the Circle 4 meeting, held in the home of Mrs. O. E. Braseth. The service will be held at 7 p.m. on Thanksgiving eve, with the children of the church offering a special treat of candies, nuts, cookies, and things to be sent to the orphan house in Alaska, Haines House.

Mrs. Dick Neely, candy project chairman, reported a sell out on the successful project just completed.

Thank offering envelopes were distributed to members with their purpose being explained by Mrs. Jack Piper.

Nominating committee submitted their report as follows: Nola Campbell, chairman; Lois Newby, vice chairman; Roberta Lewis, secretary; and Joan Strickler, treasurer.

Jo Hug reported on the Nov. 19, bazaar plans and reminded members of their responsibilities in the booth.

This group is in charge of a wedding reception in the church, Nov. 21, according to Mrs. Jack Piper.

Mrs. Howard Anderson presented the program on "Fellowship of Faith."

Hostess and co-hostess, Ruby Hepburn, served refreshments.

Elgin PTA Meets Tonight

ELGIN (Special) — The Elgin PTA will meet tonight in the school auditorium at 7:30. The Elgin Ministerial Association will be in charge of the program with Thanksgiving as their theme. The Rev. Volney Johnson will be in charge. Seventh grade mothers will serve refreshments after the meeting.

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and I appeared at the People's Court. I counted 32 people seated quietly on the hard wooden benches. For the most part they were shabbily dressed and appeared to be tense and troubled. The women outnumbered the men four to one.

Three judges and a court reporter entered. Everyone rose. Two of the judges were women—blond, fortyish and pleasingly plump. The male judge had a thick grey mane, pince-nez glasses, and a Charlie Chaplin moustache. He was neater than most Russian men in his sandy brown suit and blue necktie. None of the judges wore robes.

Kline explained that the woman in the center was the judge elected by the people. The other woman and the man were lay assessors. Lay assessors are selected by fellow employees of a factory, foundry, collective farm or construction unit. They serve 10 days a year and it is considered an honor to be chosen to serve. In this Godless society witnesses are not sworn in, of course, but serious punishment is meted out if it is demonstrated that a witness has testified falsely.

MALE ATTORNEY

The first case was presented by a speedy female attorney. She wore a navy blue crepe dress which looked as if she'd put it in the washing machine. Yards of braids were wound tightly around her head.

Her client Thomas Benolganova, a dishwasher in a small hotel, was suing his wife Ulinova for the right to live in her apartment. In 1955 Thomas had run afoul of the law for speculation (selling at a profit). He was sentenced to serve four years in prison. When Thomas returned home he found his wife had a permanent house guest named Gregory.

The attorney emphasized that Thomas was not interested in enjoying the "wifely companionship" of Ulinova. He wanted only to live in the apartment and mind his own business.

Ulinova was not represented by counsel. She spoke in her own behalf. Thomas, she said, drank too much and had a bad temper. He had struck Gregory on two occasions and had spied on them. He had struck Gregory on two occasions and had spied on them. He helped himself to the food in the ice box although he never brought home anything to eat. She asked the court to order him to stay out of the apartment.

PLAINTIFF WINS

The case was heard in 50 minutes and the judges adjourned for 15 minutes. Thomas won the right to remain in the apartment. Ulinova and Thomas were still legally married, the judge ruled, and a man has the right to live in the same apartment with his wife. Thomas was ordered to pay one-third of the rent, however, and contribute to the grocery bill if he intended to eat there.

Thomas grinned and shook hands with his attorney. Ulinova burst into tears. Gregory, scarlet with rage, led her from the courtroom.

The next case was presented by another lady attorney who wore a mannish suit and a boyish bob.

She represented Helen and Akim Rigavitch. Both Helen and Akim worked at the Moskovitch automobile factory. The Rigavitches were suing Irene and Louis Servinova. Irene operated an elevator and Louis was a hod-carrier. The suit was for 2500 rubles (\$250). Their case was a striking illustration of the tension and misery that is so often the product of communal living.

The Rigavitches and the Servinovas (plus a third family) share a four-room apartment. One bathroom serves the six adults and

seven children. The Rigavitches charged that the Servinovas broke their \$110 TV set and were three months in arrears with their share of the electric meter bill. They also complained that the Servinovas had broken two windows during an argument and refused to replace them.

Moreover, said the Rigavitches, the Servinovas were selfish about the bathroom and often lingered for unreasonable periods of time so the others would be late for work. They never bought their own soap and frequently used excessive amounts of hot water so there would be none for the others.

CHARGES DENIED

Servinova presented the defense. He denied breaking the TV set and said it was burned out from use. He pleaded guilty to being in arrears with the meter payments but claims the price of medicine for his tubercular mother had kept him financially strapped. (I had thought that all medical care in Russia was free. This is only partly true. Treatment and hospitalization are provided by the state but Russians must buy their own medicine.)

He claimed it was the Rigavitches who had broken the windows during the argument. At this point Mrs. Rigavitch sprang to her feet and shouted, "You are a big liar." The lady judge ordered her to be seated.

After 12 minutes of deliberation the court ordered the Servinovas to pay 2000 rubles (instead of the 2500 for which they were sued) and admonished the defendants to quit abusing the bathroom privileges. The Rigavitches seemed pleased. The Servinovas showed no sign of emotion.

The next case was Lova Uzbekadonetz, a professor of foreign languages, versus Katherine Uzbekadonetz. Here in People's Court he was taking the first step in a divorce action. Lova's attorney charged that Katherine had been intimate with a foreman at the glue factory where she was employed. The child she was carrying belonged to the foreman, he said. A medical certificate, obtained by Lova's attorney, stated he was unable to produce children due to a war injury.

Katherine twisted her handkerchief nervously during the proceedings. She did not contest the divorce. She confined herself to a statement that she hoped the divorce would be granted before the birth of her child so she and the foreman could be married. She wanted no settlement, only the stove and the TV set.

These proceedings took only 30 minutes. The judges did not adjourn. The male member of the panel announced that the case would be heard in the Province Court (the next step) at the earliest possible date.

Kline explained that the People's Court cannot grant a divorce. This hearing was simply the "formal complaint." I asked if he thought Katherine would be free to marry Lova before the child was born.

"She'll be lucky if she's free when the child starts to school," he said. "If there was no child involved she would have no chance at all—which is probably why she is pregnant."

"I'd be very interested in attending a Moscow City Court session and watching a divorce trial," I said. "Could you spare a couple of hours tomorrow?" He thought he could—and tomorrow I will tell you the story of divorce in Russia and how the rulers of this country have gone from one ridiculous extreme to the other.

Woman's World

MAXINE NURMI, Woman's Editor

'Books, Children, TV' Topic Of Speaker At Willow PTA

Members of Willow PTA listened with interest to Mrs. Kattie May Crackett, librarian in charge of the children's library at Eastern Oregon College, and Dr. James Kearns, supervisor of secondary education at EOC, discuss books, children and TV.

That more children are reading more books each year and that some of the interest in books is stimulated directly by TV programs was news to many in the audience. From the psychologist's viewpoint, Dr. Kearns related much of TV is good, with the exception of excessive violence and some commercials in poor taste. Dr. Kearns also recommended the evaluation of TV programs given each month in the National Parent-Teacher magazine.

Shower Fetes Judy Rowett

NORTH POWDER (Special) — Mrs. Susan Lampkin, Mrs. Blanche Lampkin, Mrs. Barbara Monaghan, Mrs. Marvin Vancil and Mrs. Jeany Bryant, were hostesses to a bridal shower honoring Miss Judy Rowett.

The affair was held in the grand hall, decorated with bouquets of flowers and winter arrangements. The honored was presented a corsage by Mrs. Tom Lampkin.

Patric a Rowett and Donna Fordice assisted the honored in opening her many gifts.

Kay Griffith, Judy Monaghan, Lynne Vancil and Sherry Griffith entertained for the program.

Refreshments of cake, coffee and punch were served by the committee. Mrs. Harold Rowett poured the punch and Mrs. Willard Fordice served coffee.

Patriotic Theme Of OES Meeting

Hope Chapter 13, Order of the Eastern Star met Wednesday evening in the lodge room of the Masonic hall. The hall was decorated in the patriotic theme with a large United States flag draped on the piano in back of an arrangement of red and white roses. There was a bouquet of red roses on the secretary's desk.

The meeting was presided over by Virginia Kubler, worthy matron and William Kubler, worthy patron. A Thanksgiving donation was sent to the Masonic and Eastern Star Home at Forest Grave. Anne Campbell of Julia Chapter 56, Canyon City was a visitor.

Dot Anson, who recently took a trip to the Hawaiian Islands, gave an account of her travels and of her visit to a Hawaiian Chapter of the Eastern Star.

The tables in the dining room were decorated with bouquets of mums and baskets of fall foliage and fruits. The refreshment committee was Abbie Black and Leila Haun. Co-chairmen, assisted by Rosa and Ed Ebell, Dortha and Ray White, Marie Bever, Cassie Roesch, Florence Anderson, Leona H. Arnoldus and Faye M. Bailie.

Mrs. Carson Hosts Ladies Aid Meet

Mrs. Minnie Carson of Perry was the hostess to members of the Riverside Ladies Aid recently, for their monthly meeting.

There were 11 members and one guest, Mrs. Tillie Smith present. Laura Andrews, president, presided over the short business session.

Grace Briggs was awarded the gift for the day; she selected the correct blessing from a horn of plenty.

Refreshments, carrying out the Thanksgiving theme, was served by the hostess.

The next meeting will be held in December, at the home of Edith McLean. This will be a Christmas party with gift exchange.

Thanksgiving Service Set At Local Church

The Hendrix Methodist church will hold a Thanksgiving Day service beginning at 9:30 a.m. until 10:20 a.m. on Nov. 26. This was announced by the Rev. Neal van Leon.

Rainbow Girls will meet Monday evening at 7 for a regular meeting in the Masonic hall.

LOCAL EVENTS

Knights of Pythias will meet at the KP hall Monday at 8 p.m. A special event of the meeting will be nomination of officers. All members are being urged to be present.

A Drivers License Examiner will be on duty in La Grande on Tuesday at 106 Depot Street between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Persons wishing original licenses or permits to drive are ahead of the scheduled closing hour in order to assure time for completion of the required license test.

M/Sgt. W. F. Lillis, United States Army Recruiter, will be in La Grande two days a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. He will be in the Selective Service office located in the Post Office building.

Royal Neighbors will hold a birthday dinner, Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Odd Fellows hall. Members with birthdays from July through December will be honored. Gladys Lester, chairman, asks all other members to contact her. Lodge to follow at 8. Drill team in orchid form for initiation. Graces and marshals to hold practice before lodge.

GIA to B of LE Social club will meet Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. in the home of Mrs. Walter Ingerson, 2006 First Street.

DAV Auxiliary and Chapter will hold their Thanksgiving potluck dinner in the Armory, Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Pep Club members will be selling Christmas ribbon, cards and wrapping. Tuesday evening between 7 and 8 o'clock. They will be going from house to house.

Celebrating birthdays today will be Jean Hill, Union, and Howard Zuzwalt, La Grande.

Zion Lutheran Church will observe Thanksgiving Day with services at 9 a.m. The Rev. E. W. Kasten will speak and the choir will sing special numbers.

THE WHEEL will be open Thanksgiving Day Serving Turkey Dinner For The Whole Family NOON 'TIL 8 P.M.

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