

Page 2, Die Welt-Post, Thursday, March 23, 1922 (Huck)

Huck, January 16, 1922

To: Alexander Seibel, Grand Island, Nebraska

Dear Alexander:

Your letter of 9 November is in our hands. Our best thanks.

When we received it, Papa was still healthy, at present however, he suffers from a malicious case of Spotted Typhoid Fever, therefore I am obliged to answer your letter in his place.

It gave us great joy to once again hear something of you, to get a good message from a better world. One immediately sees that you still "live" in the full sense of the word, but we poor sons-of-bitches do not know real "life" any longer. Our life is indescribably wretched and our pain is likewise. Our Volga villages have never seen such misery as now. Daily the elderly and the children die, brought down by hunger and misery; unparalled famine prevails here.

What we suffer is the highest measure of suffering. Like bloodhounds, troubles fell upon us Germans, killing whatever they desired, often with great torment, turning the villages into deserted wastelands and preying on everything that was clinging to life. Abandoned orphaned children wander about by the thousands. This once blessed region no longer sees itself as such. Death and hunger hang over us all. One often despairs and loses faith that there will be any improvement. Could it truly be God's will that everything be lost and everything die? Yes, one can almost believe it. Naturally, one seeks to alleviate the emergency; Mr. Repp has opened kitchens in almost all of the villages, but this will not improve the emergency for a long time yet.

If you could only be here for an instant and see everything then you would get a first hand idea of the indescribable misery. The prices for food and everything else are so high that we officials are completely concerned with any possibility of existence. One wants to seek help but one does not know where to turn for it, for everywhere there is the same poverty.

You, dear, fortunate Alexander, perhaps had an idea of our poverty and offered to assist us. We accept your offer with grateful hearts and promise to repay you everything in the future when things are better once again.

First among all needs is the lack of food, then clothing and footwear. Clothing can be sent directly from America to the person concerned. Food however, one gets in the following manner: Over there you pay a certain sum of dollars for a particular person, say you want to help Jakob Rusch, then a duplicate copy is sent which can be used to receive food products from the American Commission Volga German supplies that they have here. If you were to deposit 100 dollars, then here one would get so much foodstuffs that one could live 5 to 6 months. Many individuals have already received gifts in this manner.

Now a bit about the general conditions of our family. Our youngest brother, Johannes, died this past summer of Typhoid Fever. I, Constantin, was only recently demobilized from military service and am at home helping take care of Papa. Jakob is in Kautz, Heinrich is in Michelsfeld with Jekatermodar (?); my sister Amalia is in Germany; she just got there in December; Karl is schoolmaster in Neu-Messer, Imanuel in Merkel, likewise a schoolmaster, brother Sascha is in Huck with Papa. As I already mentioned at the start, our Papa is seriously ill, most always unconscious, however we have high hopes for a recovery. Mummy is still pretty healthy, caring for the old man makes for her many sleepless nights.

Otherwise I can write you nothing at all pleasing from the old homeland.

We greet everyone cordially. With greetings and kisses, yours,

Constantin Rusch