

## Letter D 1 - translation

March 10 1932 (s. farther down)

N..30

<sup>1</sup>Dear children, Renate and Johann Dyck!

Also to you my dear new Grandchildren! Firstly I wish you dear ones in a far-off-land, God's gracious presence in body and soul, good health and your daily bread. As Johannes<sup>2</sup> wrote, daily bread for you in America is not as scarce as here for us in Russia. Here there's a yearning for the good whole-wheat bread, and it's not available. When we arrived here in fall, a loaf of bread of about 10 to 12 pounds cost 5 Rubel and by Christmas it was 6 Rubel. In the new year it was 7 and by now it is 10 Rubel and difficult to get. If this continues, I don't know how we will make it. It is expensive, but I and Maria have one Pud of each type of flour, though one cannot buy any. I was willing to give 45 Rubel for wheat flour but till now have not received any. I will now get to the point. On February 15th I wrote you a letter, saying that we received by parcel-post, the package<sup>3</sup> that was addressed to Gerhard Peter Wall (mailed in July) arrived here to our great joy, on February 14<sup>th</sup>. That brought great joy. Besides that there is nothing that we can be pleased about. There were 750 grams coffee, 1000 grams sugar, 1500 grams rice, 1000 grams porridge or gruel, 25 grams soap. I also immediately reported receiving this to Hermann Dietz in Berlin and will write him again in case the first letter does not arrive. Yesterday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, a second parcel arrived, containing 625 grams coffee, 1000 grams sugar, 1500 grams rice and 1000 grams porridge or gruel. My dear children, I should be glad and will be, but when I consider that this year you had such a poor crop of which you even shared some with others, I feel somewhat depressed. You are hurting in order to bless others. And you my dear ones cannot count on me recompensing you, as I've gotten too old and too poor, but I can pray for you, that our dear Heavenly Father will bless you for what all you do for your aging father. Yes, I want to give you a hearty thank you for all you do, for the love you give to me. May our faithful God shower you in multiple ways with His love and blessings to children's children. Yesterday we received another small parcel from Chiwavom Son Peter<sup>4</sup>, who sent us 8 pounds

## Letter D 2

of rice. Well, he may also be a little short after giving us some, therefore I need to immediately write to each of them to inform them of the receipt of these parcels, also to inform Herman Dietz in Berlin of my receipt. I'm actually not in the mood to thanking and writing much because on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, when I was trying to get out of bed to start the day, I sank to the floor and tried to get up but could not. So Henry<sup>5</sup> came and helped me back into bed. At first I thought it

<sup>1</sup>Willi Frese. Peter Mathies writes this letter to (1851-1934) (GRANDMA #109037) the family of his daughter Renate Mathies (1885-1963) (GRANDMA #168775) and her husband Johannes Dyck (1885-1948) (GRANDMA #168774)

<sup>2</sup>Willi Frese. Johannes Dyck (1885-1948) (GRANDMA #168774)

<sup>3</sup>Elena Klassen – Postpaket (parcel-post)

<sup>4</sup>Willi Frese. Peter Mathies (1902-1943) (GRANDMA #1196411)

<sup>5</sup>Willi Frese. Heinrich Isaak (1877-1934) (GRANDMA #1196412)

might be a stroke, but it proved not to be that. I was only so weak, so I stayed in bed all day Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> I got up but had so little strength and am still very weak. I always had such a good appetite, but that's gone now, so I don't care whether I eat once or three times per day. Dear Maria immediately got me some medicine, sending it from town, which I faithfully take three times per day, but it doesn't taste too great. Now everything will be back to normal provided I should still live. I also hurt my shin when I bumped it hard against the customer- service stairway yesterday, which is quite painful. For that she sent a save, so everything will be well again. We are waiting for letters with answers in return? We wrote 1 letter to you, 1 to Peter<sup>6</sup>, 1 to Gustav Toews, 1 to Gerhard Esau<sup>7</sup>, 1 to Gerhard P. Wall, 1 to Cornelius Mathies (Barnaul) and Peter Mathies' wife, and now I need to mail the most urgent ones.

**Cornelius Mathies writes**, that in four of their villages smallpox has been prevalent, causing sacrifices in that schools were closed for a while but are now again being opened. He writes that his daughter Helene died on January 6<sup>th</sup>. but of Spinal-chord-spasms, not smallpox, at age 9 years, 4 months and 13 days. His family including both parents and four children are still at home. On August 18, 1931 Cornelius married Sarah Wiens; on December 26 1929 his daughter Elizabeth got married and by October 12<sup>th</sup> 1930 had a baby girl, named Cathrine. Consequently he is for a long time already, a grandfather, a title he's very proud of. So each person has something, some this and others that, yet no one is without faults. His wife is often sickly, he works at the forge as a blacksmith, and his son Gerhard is taking a course. He feels that he's got enough

### Letter D 3

to live on, as he write that from Artel<sup>8</sup> he received 85 Pud wheat, but very little meat. He [WF Cornelius Martens] mentions that his family, not too long ago had 9 souls and now only 6 souls are left. He also write that Jacob Penners<sup>9</sup>, that used to live in Fresenheim, are both dead. It is not mentioned whether families are still allowed to go abroad. Tomorrow evening it will be one year since Bart-Froese's son, from Lindenau, hung himself with a strap<sup>10</sup>, because of his many debts. It is tragic that he leaves behind a large family, as it used to be? His brother [WF.a brother of Bart-Froese?], Henry Mathies lives four Werst away [from WR von Cornelius Mathies] and also has a large family of 9 souls. His daughter Elizabeth [daughter of Bart-Froese?] is married to a Cornelius Fast. Cornelius Mathies also mentions that many of those who were sent out have died, but he does not mention if these were from our people, Mennonites or persons of other confessions and where these are from. I've asked him about this as I would like to know more details<sup>11</sup>. Being deep in thought, I just remember when in 1907 on May 4<sup>th</sup>. I

<sup>6</sup>Willi Frese. Peter Mathies (1902-1943) (GRANDMA #1196411)

<sup>7</sup>Willi Frese. Gerhard Esau (1897-1931) (GRANDMA #347042)

<sup>8</sup>Willi Risto. Artel. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artel>

<sup>9</sup>Alex Wiens. It involves Jakob Penner (ca. 1870er-1930er), and his wife named Helene. He moved to Altai. His father was Peter Penner, #342408 from Fresenheim.

<sup>10</sup> Elena Klassen - Gürtel

<sup>11</sup> Willi Risto. Would like to get to the bottom of this.

took my brother<sup>12</sup> and his family from Saratow to Semipalatinsk, which I was not at all happy about, because Wiebe<sup>13</sup> bought him out and I could not do anything about it. My brother suggested that I buy him out – my brother, that would be the day. Money-wise he could have made it and stayed here. Never-the-less, as he sold, I told him he should not take his family to Semipalatinsk, but to America, to which he replied; is this not far enough? Shall I go still farther? I said, it is far enough for letter correspondence, and that we can also have from America. For personal visits, they are both too far, but for your family at this time<sup>14</sup>, it is better to leave here and hopefully easier to get started out there. In the long-run you could be enjoying it here, and for you it is now better than for me, but still not really good. Formerly you were very poor; therefore you would not have to suffer want and allow others to rob you because there was so little, as they did it to me. Naturally, looking at it from today's standpoint<sup>15</sup>, it would also have been better for me to leave and get out, as I advised my brother.

**[WF. Peter Mathies seems to have been a very wise man.]**

I have never mentioned it again because he did not want me to. In the year 1925 on March 14<sup>th</sup> (on a grand scale) brother Gerhard died at Barnaul, village Calhinofka<sup>16</sup> at age 69 years 8 months and 7 days, and the sister-in-law, as I discovered,

**Letter D 4**

Is to have died on April 1<sup>st</sup>. 1931. As I learned from the letter from Chiwaschen [from Chiwa] the son of Cornelius Isaak Wall, the second from Aliata, was also driven out. Greetings from Cornelius who, with P. (Peter?), was visiting in Chiwa. Henry<sup>17</sup> and Catharine<sup>18</sup> have received a letter from Aganetha Philipsen in which she writes, that the mother has been suffering for some time. Yes, Tante Philipsen<sup>19</sup> is getting old, and that comes quickly<sup>20</sup>, which I'm also feeling, and she's four years older than I am.

<sup>12</sup>Alex Wiens. In A Pilgrim People gibt es auf S. 15 ein Mathies Stammbaum. After that Peter Mathies had two Brothers – Johannes (died in W. Preussen) und Gerhard (†1925 in Sibirien) and one Sister Anna.

<sup>13</sup>Alex Wiens. Jakob Wiebe (1848-1913) (GRANDMA#19149). In 1907 he bought the estate from Gerhard Mathies in Orloff, for his daughter, Anna & husband Johannes Bergmann. R. Friesen „Mennoniten in Mittelrasien“ S. 233.

<sup>14</sup>Willi Risto. In these days

<sup>15</sup>Willi Frese. From today's vantage point

<sup>16</sup>Willi Frese. Kalinovka? **See green Map at end of letter.**

<sup>17</sup>Willi Frese. Heinrich Isaak (1877-1934) (GRANDMA #1196412)

<sup>18</sup>Willi Frese. Katharina Mathies (1883-1953) (GRANDMA #1196403)

<sup>19</sup>Alex Wiens. Aganetha Philipsen, geb. Klaassen (1846-1933) (GRANDMA#991220), Mother of Heinrich Isaak. Aganetha Philipsen, who wrote the letter to Heinrich Isaak, could be his daughter. But I'm not familiar with that.

<sup>20</sup>Willi Risto. Old age creeps up suddenly, and that is not pleasant

That now in the Collective, the milk-maidens each have to feed their own cows is probably a great mistake<sup>21</sup>. You can just imagine what motivates that! While one may be very much in favor of taking care of cattle, the other is as much opposed to it. As long as the men were doing the feeding it worked well, but there must be change and with that Postum<sup>22</sup> that they should all be brought to the mental institution. I received a letter from Johannes Philipsen from Panarstiel [?] He's been advised to stay there for three months, taking a course on raising cattle. That's how it is, they want to give them very little feed, especially the young ones, and giving them corn-straw is missing the mark, as that is better used to feed a stove to warm a room<sup>23</sup>.

At noon they give him soup while he gets black bread for breakfast and supper. Honorable Irma<sup>24</sup>, congratulations on your birthday on March 20<sup>th</sup>, and to you dear Johannes<sup>25</sup>, for your birthday on April 4<sup>th</sup>, I wish you much luck and blessing in the new year. To you, dear Renate<sup>26</sup>, I congratulate you on your birthday; soon you'll be grown up? And you dear Clara<sup>27</sup>, I congratulate for your birthday on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. I wish all of you God's rich blessings in body and soul. I'm sending you a copy of the poem by Gerhard Toews, not knowing if that interests you but it is something different! I also have a poem by our dear Johannes<sup>28</sup> that I am sending to you, Renate, this May it will be ten years. Where has the time gone, - flown by like the wind and I with it, all in such a dreary pressurized time, it is astounding how it continues on into eternity till we are all up there. Will close for now; more at another time if we are still alive. Heart-felt greetings also to you dear ones, from Heinrich<sup>29</sup>, Cathrina<sup>30</sup>, Maria<sup>31</sup>, Anna<sup>32</sup> Kaethe<sup>33</sup>, which I include. I remain your loyal faithful father and grandfather, Peter Mathies<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Willi Frese. Probably a miss-directed messed up business

<sup>22</sup> Willi Risto. Postum = later

<sup>23</sup> Willi Risto. Straw can be used to heat a room, but is not fit fodder for cattle

<sup>24</sup> Willi Frese. Irma Dyck (1912-2003) (GRANDMA #444298)

<sup>25</sup> Willi Frese. Johannes Dyck (1885-1948) (GRANDMA #168774)

<sup>26</sup> Willi Frese. Renate Mathies (1885-1963) (GRANDMA #168775)

<sup>27</sup> Willi Frese. Clara Dyck (1918-2018) (GRANDMA #701434)

<sup>28</sup> Willi Frese. Johannes Mathies (1893-1922) (GRANDMA #1196408)

<sup>29</sup> Willi Frese. Heinrich Isaak (1877-1934) (GRANDMA #1196412)

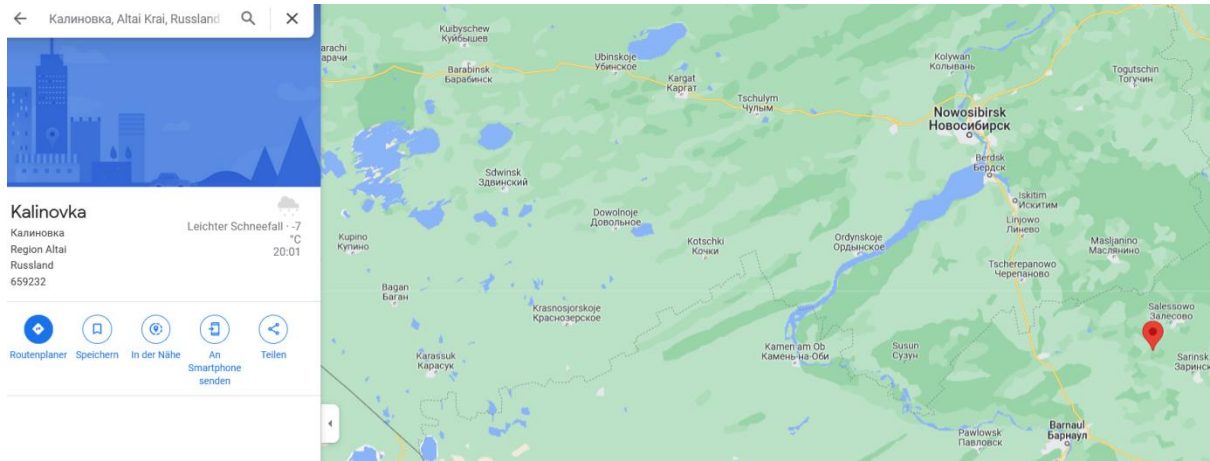
<sup>30</sup> Willi Frese. Katharina Mathies (1883-1953) (GRANDMA #1196403)

<sup>31</sup> Willi Frese. Maria Mathies (1909-1993) (GRANDMA #1196425)

<sup>32</sup> Willi Frese. Anna Isaak (1906-1937) (GRANDMA #1196413)

<sup>33</sup> Willi Frese. Käthe Isaak (1910-1985) (GRANDMA #1196414)

<sup>34</sup> Willi Frese. Peter Mathies (1851-1934) (GRANDMA #109037)



Kaethe is at home now, March 14, 1932, as last week she had a large ulcer on her arm with intense pain, but is now somewhat better. She's also suffering from a severe cold. We are still experiencing winter weather with temperatures as low as  $-42^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Now it is milder but the furnace is still necessary.