

(E)rase, (R)eply, (S)ave, (Q)uit, (N)ew: 3

Message #3 (67 lines)

From sovamsu.sovusa.com!teolog Wed Jan 27 03:52:59 1993

From: teolog@sovamsu.sovusa.com ( )

Date: Wed, 27 Jan 1993 14:53:19 MSK

To: jtsyivo@pandora

Subject: Wed. Midday News

Cc:

1. Construction continues in dorms. They've been working 7 AM to at least 9 PM and, thank God, our neighbors are being cordial about the racket so far. The chief engineer and the director of a cooperative they've hired workers from have told me that they'll work through Saturday and Sunday, too. Their priorities, according to the line construction staff (as opposed to the nachalstvo), are to complete two doubles and the kitchen equipment ASAP, but the projected date (acc to a worker) is 7 February at the earliest.

2. Re: construction price. The glavni engineer showed me the protocol you signed on New Year's Eve and, as you know, there was an open-ended clause about final costs to be paid upon receipt of the final smet'. The engineer explained that the cost estimate of R10,200 came from him and the cooperative's director's based on certain unforeseen increases in materials and especially due to the fact that they discovered that the walls through which they had to punch doors were metal-reinforced concrete and not the wooden walls they expected (I vouch for that; I've seen the walls laid open), so they had to bring in a compressor and special crew to work it. That part makes some sense, but

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but I asked don't they have plans, blueprints and they said the Party people had taken them with them when they left. They have floor plans, but not structural details. I noted that they'd rebuilt the 4th floor and they must have known about the concrete walls. He explained that they now realize the building is built in a certain kind of Soviet construction whereby the building's outer frame is concrete and MOST of the floors are wooden with wooden internal walls, but, for structural integrity, every THIRD floor is concrete as are its dividing internal walls (thus floors 3, 6 and 9 are concrete; the FOURTH was wood, so they didn't know). Just our luck. I found his explanation credible, alas.

Nevertheless, I pointed out that the dollar has risen to R600 (!) since our discussions and that they've been spending RUBLES, so the price should be coming down, not going up. He recalculated on the spot and said that his estimate of 10,200 would now be worth about \$7,000 and asked if that was OK. I gave him a speech about how, while we have dollars, we're a struggling institution with dolla

r expenses, so we're not as rich as they think. He countered with "You'd pay that much for construction in the States," and I replied that this project was budgeted for Russian conditions and the construction, after all, is being done under Russian conditions. He agreed, backed off and said he'd get us a full acctg.

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ASAP of actual costs and then the rukovodstvo will have to decide the matter.

Sorry for running on, but you need to have the flavor of what's going on right now.

3. Kior had no time to meet with me this AM due to an All-Russian Scholars Conference that he's running for the next couple o days. It opened today and the place is a madhouse. He'll call me tonight. Starostin and I had a quickie meeting in the corridor and he seems OK though he's been summoned (with Vlasova) to the rector's office FIVE times in the last two days for shouting matches and recriminations (most, by te way, directed at VLASOVA! from what I'm hearing).

4. Starostin and Kior tell me they're on top of the library sitation and that it isn;t worth worryin about. More to follow. Our first teleport bill came in, but I haven't seen it yet. Will advise. No fax bills yet.

More later. Your fax to the rector hadn't been seen by him yeat this moning, but I'm sure it will genrate another round of heated discussons.

Forgive the typos, I'm in a hurry. I hope the delay o Roskies arrival won't

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screw up Aryeh Leib's schooling. Let me know if you need me to speak with the AngloAm School.

there was a reporter here from Chronicle of Higer Ed. He interviewed me, Basovskaya amnd Starostin, I believe. There may be something comin up. we'll see.

the newly appt'd US Ambassador, Tom Pickering, and his wife Alice served with me on the NY Fletcher Alumni Board. I know them not well, but persnally. Can't hurt....

JDC tells me that tthe UJA Rabbinic Cabinet wants to hear about our program on 8 February. I said fine and will present something. If you have any thoughts about what or how to present things, let me know....

Bye. YJR