

*Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, vol. 45, no. 2,  
March–April 2007, pp. 11–60.  
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ISSN 1061–0405/2007 \$9.50 + 0.00.  
DOI 10.2753/RPO1061-0405450201

## In Memory of L.S. Vygotsky (1896–1934)

### L.S. Vygotsky: Letters to Students and Colleagues

*Editor's note:* Vygotsky's letters were prepared for publication in *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta* in 1986. The first half of the selection was made into pages and the second half submitted for makeup, but publication proved impossible under the conditions at that time. For many years, the materials were considered missing and unaccounted for: they were neither in the editorial board's archives nor in the possession of A.A. Puzyrei, the compiler and copyright holder of the first publication of the selection of Vygotsky letters edited and annotated by him. The editor's copy turned up in 2002—quite unexpectedly, in the archives of A.R. Luria. It was discovered and resubmitted to the editorial board by T.V. Akhutina. Any reader familiar with the book by G.L. Vygodskaia and T.M. Lifanova, *Lev Semenovich Vygotskii. Zhizn'. Deiatel'nost'. Shtrikhi k portretu* [Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Life. Career. Brushstrokes of a Portrait] (Moscow: Smysl, 1996), knows, of course, that that book includes virtually all of these letters in the form of extended excerpts. But at the same time, the authors state that Vygotsky's letters still await the day they become available to the reading public, and they confirm A.A. Puzyrei's right to publish them first (see *ibid.*, p. 210, n. 418). In connection with the foregoing, the editors hereby announce that

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Translated by Bruce Collins.

Notes renumbered for this edition.—Ed.

the selection of L.S. Vygotsky's letters to his students and colleagues is being *published for the first time* in this issue of the journal *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 14, Psychology.

*Compiler's note:* As far as we know, Vygotsky did not keep diaries in the ordinary sense of the word. His working notes and drafts, excerpts that have been presented in previous archival publications, might be regarded as diaries of sorts. But although they bring the reader into the creative laboratory of Vygotsky as an investigator, the fact is that they present only the intellectual side of that laboratory. Meanwhile, the social and personal context of his creative endeavors (and the context of Vygotsky's life in general) are likewise important for a complete and proper understanding of Vygotsky's scientific endeavors. Without this, an understanding of Vygotsky as a scientist is impossible. This can be attributed to the special nature and status of his work, the actual research and technical-design aspects that are interrelated in a close and complex manner.

Vygotsky, especially in the last years of his life, worked in a difficult and in many ways even dramatic setting. I am referring to the various twists and turns of the "public discussion"—an extremely pointed discussion that, for the most part, had nothing to do with serious scientific discourse—regarding cultural-historical theory, which began in the early 1930s, both on the pages of journals focusing on the psychology of physical and mental disabilities, and within the walls of a number of scientific institutions. The complicated situation within the group consisting of Vygotsky's closest students and colleagues that arose as a result of the formation of the so-called Kharkov group pitted itself against Vygotsky's positions on a whole series of fundamental issues, a situation that Vygotsky himself regarded as all but the collapse of his life's "cause" (see Vygotsky's letter to Leontiev of August 2, 1933); and, finally, to the relapses of tuberculosis that exhausted Vygotsky and robbed him of any certainty in planning his work (see his letter to Luria of July 13, 1932, and others). In addition, one could mention the hardships of everyday life in an overcrowded apartment, and the enormous amount of routine teaching and publishing work that Vygotsky was forced to do to earn an income and that sometimes drove him to the point of despair (see his letter to Luria of June 1, 1931, and others), work that took up a large part of the already meager time that fate had allotted him and that was in such short supply for his "cause."

Only Vygotsky's amazing self-control even in the most difficult and

critical situations, his ability to concentrate on the most important matters and his ability to subordinate everything in life to the long-term interests of “his cause” in psychology and, more broadly, in life, only his sense of his vocation and his conviction that the pathway he had found in psychology was valid and important, as well as his unique ability to live and do all his work “cleanly,” without drafts and revisions—these things alone are what enabled Vygotsky, in the difficult circumstances of the last years of his life, not only to continue his intensive and productive investigations but also to write a series of works that constituted an entire epoch in the development of psychological thinking. Like no one else, Vygotsky realized what was going on around him clearly and with all seriousness. At the same time, however, he “kept this awareness to himself,” never revealing it even to his closest associates; rather, he sought to encourage and reassure them and to serve as a “buffer” between them and the “outside world” (see his letter to Luria of June 1, 1931, and others).

The completeness with which Vygotsky controlled his own life and subordinated it to his work and journey was such that he was even able, perhaps, to put his own illness (chronic and progressive tuberculosis) in the “service” of his overall objectives in life and his values, which remained unshakable throughout his adult life. It is perhaps no accident that the writing of Vygotsky’s most important works (beginning with his *Istoricheskii smysl psikhologicheskogo krizisa* [Historical Significance of the Psychological Crisis], 1927) coincided in time with acute exacerbations of his disease; it seems as if, for Vygotsky, that disease was a constant reflection of his perception of life, his “memento mori”—not so much a kind of “doping” that helped him constantly “sublimate” his intellectual powers and forced him to hurry and never know rest, but also as a means of an existential “broadening of the situation.” In the face of an inevitable early death (doctors had on more than one occasion given Vygotsky a death sentence, telling him he had just months to live), Vygotsky acquired an ability to “see the situation correctly” and assess events and situations properly, and thus an ability to “rise above” them, to attain freedom with respect to them (see the first letter to Luria and others). Vygotsky’s illness served him as a means of controlling his mind and reshaping it, “helping” him stand firm in critical situations not just as a scientist, but also as a human being. In the case of Vygotsky, however, this is just one aspect. The purity of his moral stance, the seriousness and honesty of his searchings, the inadmissibility of concessions and compromises on matters of principle—these traits were equally

characteristic of both Vygotsky's path in science and his relationships with people. "Courage," said Camus, "has always and everywhere meant just one thing: honest thinking!" This statement by Pascal could be the motto of Vygotsky's whole life and all of his creative activity. In the history of twentieth-century Russian and perhaps even world psychology, it is hard to find another equally courageous and tragic figure—a thinker who found totally new pathways—heuristic even today—in the development of psychological thinking, a scholar whose true intellectual and overall spiritual potential has not only not been exhausted, but has perhaps not even been truly revealed as yet and may still be awaiting its genuine appreciation.

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The letters of Vygotsky published here are not easy to understand. They have a multilayered subtext and are full of (sometimes veiled) literary reminiscences and keen social allusions and assessments. In contrast to Vygotsky's manuscripts, which are usually quite readable, his letters are often written in a kind of shorthand and contain numerous abbreviations. The substantive and historical contexts are not always clear. All of these things make it difficult to decipher the letters with certainty. All places where the compiler reconstructed the text, minor cuts, and insertions that do not belong to Vygotsky himself, but are needed in order to produce a coherent text, are marked with square brackets. The spellings, punctuation and emphases in the text are Vygotsky's. The compiler is grateful to the journal's research editor and to T.A. Nezhnova, as well as to T.V. Akhutina, A.N. Zhdan, and D.A. Leontiev, for their assistance in updating certain parts of the commentary.

Vygotsky's letters to L.S. Sakharov and G.I. Sakharova are preserved in the Vygotsky family archive and are published with the permission of his daughter, G.L. Vygodskaja. Vygotsky's letters to A.R. Luria, which survive in the Luria family's archive, are published with the permission once given by his daughter, E.A. Luria. Vygotsky's letters to A.N. Leontiev are preserved in the Leontiev family archive and are published with the permission of his relatives. Vygotsky's letters to R.E. Levina and N.G. Morozova, which were preserved by their recipients, are published with their permission. Letters from all of the aforementioned correspondents to Vygotsky have not been found in the Vygotsky family archive.

The compiler of this article would like to ask all readers in possession of letters from Vygotsky or any other archival materials pertaining to him, or who know where such letters and materials can be found in government and private archives, to advise him to that effect in care of the editorial board. He will accept with gratitude all comments, clarifications, corrections and additions to this article.

—A.A. Puzyrei

**To L.S. Sakharov<sup>1</sup>**  
**Khimki, February 15, 1926**

Dear Leonid Solomonovich, both in the fall and more recently you offered to review my proofs. I have now made up my mind to take advantage of your self-sacrifice, although I am well aware of both its cost and the fact that I have absolutely no moral right to do so. I am forced to do this because I lack the physical capability<sup>2</sup> to do it myself, and the matter is urgent. I have been [in the hospital] for a week now—in large wards with six seriously ill patients each, with noise and cries, without any table, and so on. The beds are arranged side by side with no space in between, as in a barracks. Moreover, I feel terrible physically and am depressed and disheartened psychologically. In short, I simply cannot do this at the present time, and I have no one to whom I might entrust this task but you. After all, you and I have formed a closer relationship at the institute<sup>3</sup> with each other than with anyone else. The same applies to L.V. [Zankov]<sup>4</sup> and I.M. [Solov'ev],<sup>5</sup> who will of course agree to share this work with you (a reader is needed).

Here is what I would like you to do:

1. Proofread against the manuscript the revisions to my chapters in [*Practical Course*].<sup>6</sup> You will have to identify the places where the illustrations are to be inserted (which I did); other illustrations that I refer to and that are in other chapters have to be marked: See illustration no. . . ., Chapter no. . . . Al. Rom. [Luria], to whom I am writing, will show you. Then the chapter on associations has to be combined with the chapter by A.R. [Luria] (i.e., the literature citations have to be put at the end). Also, regarding Titchener's term "elaborative"<sup>7</sup> attention: If it appears in the psychology manual,<sup>8</sup> please make sure that I use it correctly. Then, please correct any *lapsuses*<sup>9</sup> or mistakes. The manuscript basically has to be clean.

2. Look over the chapters from the psychology selections.<sup>10</sup> Please give the names of the chapters and individual articles. Work out with A.R. [Luria] the format for printing citations of the source from which the article was taken (at the end, in a footnote, or in parentheses under the title). If you can, please read the chapters against the actual books, because the typist made a lot of mistakes when retyping them. Most of the books are available in the institute library. You should get my handwritten contents of each chapter from A.R. [Luria] (a list of the articles to be included in it, and compare the two). As you see, this is a huge and painstaking job. Forgive me for burdening you with fruitless and mechanical chores that I myself have failed to cope with. That is all. I thank you very much in advance for your assistance. Please give my best to I.M. [Solov'ev] and L.V. [Zankov]. I am very eager to know what you intend to do first. It seems to me (just between us) that the thing to do now is to experiment on the transformation of reactions, that is, the transformation of "mental" energy (by analogy with mechan[ical energy] into electric[cal]—light—heat; one reaction into another, affect in a game of chess, etc.). The experiments should be done on the simplest forms,<sup>11</sup> and we need to show what the sublimation\* is a particular instance of. The experimenter has to be a detective, an inventor, a schemer, a cunning fellow, and a creator of traps, and to be totally flexible and daring. Take good care of yourself.

Sincerely yours, L.V.

I am thinking about moving home to Moscow in the first few days of March.

P.S. My wife has all the materials. Please get them from her. Tel[ephone] 1-71 (Zamoskvoretskaia). Everything worked out with ["Psychology of Art"]. I do not know whether it is for the better, but it will apparently be published.<sup>12</sup> In the article on dominant reactions,<sup>13</sup> are the values for the columns and the layout of the tables wrong? Are there any nonsensical places? Please be sure to let me know if anything is absurd or does not make sense.

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\*Sublimation is a term meaning to divert energy from the immediate goal to a more acceptable social, aesthetic, or moral nature. In chemistry it means to refine or purify a substance.—Ed.

**To A.R. Luria**  
**Zakhar'ino Sanatorium,<sup>14</sup> March 5, [19]26**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I have wanted to write you for some time, but the situation around me all this time has been such that it is awkward and difficult to pick up a pen, and I have not been able to think calmly. I was very happy to receive your German article.<sup>15</sup> I am proud of you for having moved beyond the narrow bounds of what is essentially the profound provincialism<sup>16</sup> in which our psychology literature finds itself. Of course, this is only a “symptom”; I am not overestimating the importance of the work, but this is a very, very important symptom, an attempt to find a real reader interested in the scientific problem. Who reads us here? Chelpanov,<sup>17</sup> in order to count up the mistakes and then roars with delight; Frankfurt,<sup>18</sup> in order to evaluate reliability and set a rate on that basis. I myself also have the hope of forcing my daughter to read my articles (starting at the age of five!), but you do not have any children!

A few days ago, I also received my report on the psychology of deaf mutes in English<sup>19</sup>—and I experienced the same delight with it that I had over your article, and the same thoughts about it: after all, it will be read by Sherrington,<sup>20</sup> Scripture,<sup>21</sup> and the entire European and American group of psychologists who study these problems—it was as if I took in a breath of mountain air, as if I stepped out onto a vast expanse from my cramped Moscow room,<sup>22</sup> as if my pneumothorax<sup>23</sup> was taken away for a minute. No, it is essential, essential to submit research articles to foreign journals. Unfortunately, I have not received any copies and cannot send one to you—I have at hand the entire volume, a single c[opy]. I very much regret that I am not with you, not with all of you at the institute, at this difficult time of crisis. Things have gone *so* far, and much more quickly than I thought, and most important, without any major events, almost without grounds. How seriously we need to think about our fate (scientific) and the fate of the cause we have undertaken<sup>24</sup> if K.N. [Kornilov]<sup>25</sup> and other “leaders” are unwilling to think about it. I feel somewhere outside of life, or more precisely between life and death; I have not despaired yet, but I have abandoned hope.<sup>26</sup> For this reason, my thoughts somehow cannot focus on matters pertaining to my future life and work; were I not so sick, I would lurch about like Buehler’s hen before the garden fence<sup>27</sup> in which it suddenly found its opening blocked, and using the hyperkinetic method (I would throw myself at every slat)

and using trial and error I would try to save myself and to be saved. Or like Sultan<sup>28</sup> facing a difficult task, I would sit down to think.

I want to know what you are doing, what plans you are making for the summer and fall.

About your experiments. It would take me a very long time to write out everything I have been thinking. They contain broad horizons and serious dangers. You have one very valuable asset<sup>29</sup>—methodologically (an area where you need have the least concerns): secondary movements (pressure) accompanying the main reaction process reflect the outcome of the main process. That which accompanies it encounters difficulty, stretches and breaks as well. You have now proved this using the most varied materials. This constitutes a major brick in the foundation of your earlier work, and a vindication of its methodology: Thus, using the “motor system” we can read the fate of the primary process (Jungian<sup>30</sup> as well as every other), and we have the right to interpret it as a symptom. That is the most important thing for me, and after it I myself came to believe in your earlier works three more times. For me, the first question is the question of method; this, for me, is the question of truth, and hence of scientific discovery and invention. But theoretically I see many dangers in the new experiments for your earlier conclusions, as it were: For the boundary between affective disorders and all other types is erased, the specific nature of affect disappears, and your theory of emotions breaks down. How I would like to exchange views about this in a “separate discussion” at your seminar! That is all I am going to say. I am not going to respond to your two questions, because I would have to say too much in response. I am preparing (in my thoughts) two methodological “messages”—akin to letters from the GUS<sup>31</sup>—to my associates and to your group (a proposal that we join together in a single work, sharing two aspects of it; I wrote Zalkind<sup>32</sup> [about this] beforehand, a study on the blind and deafmute).<sup>33</sup> Please wait.

Write if you can. What is new in foreign and Russian literature? Who is going to the world congress of psychologists?<sup>34</sup> Give my best to your colleagues and to your wife.<sup>35</sup>

Sincerely, LV

P.S. I received a notice and letter (with threats and criticisms) from the revisions office at Lengiz.<sup>36</sup> I was forced to reply that I am ill, that I cannot be held responsible for promptly forwarding, and I gave your address. For heaven’s sake, please hurry and send it off to them!



**To A.R. Luria**  
**Perlovka Station, July 26, 1927**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, your letter was just delivered to me: I was becoming seriously concerned about your silence. A week after your departure, I sent you some books at the address you gave me, but they were returned; none of our mutual acquaintances knows anything of you. But now it turns out [that] all is well. I am very happy for the two of you: Get some rest, drink in the power of that southern wine<sup>37,\*</sup> (first and foremost), sky, wind, and sun, so you will have something to sustain you in Moscow over the winter.

I am doing well in Perlovka, reading, breathing and playing chess. I am tormented by the tuberculosis and the anticipation of an operation (a phrenicotomy),<sup>38</sup> which is apparently inevitable in the fall (the cavities in my lungs absolutely refuse to close!).

Regarding business matters: (1) I was summoned to the GIZ<sup>39</sup> to conclude a contract on “monkey”;<sup>40</sup> they offered six (!) pages. I asked for eight, and they gave me seven. It appears that I have until December 1, 1927! All that remains is to sign the contract in the contracting and accounting department; I will do that as soon as it is ready, and then they will give me the money—175 rubles. I am incredibly happy with this commission; it will be an opportunity to lay out, in a general sense, psychology with regard to culture and the superhuman.<sup>41</sup> (2) [*Practical Course*]<sup>42</sup> has been published; I have not seen it, but I have heard about it. . . . (6) My latest conviction is that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us (within the laboratory).<sup>43</sup> (7) . . . The only serious comment is that everyone should work in his field according to the instrumental method. I am investing all the rest of my life and all my energy in this. . . . I firmly shake your hand and ask you to prepare yourself (mentally, of course) for our common endeavor. Always yours, LV

P.S. I have gotten rich over the summer in the literal sense of the word, earning about 1,000 rubles; in the fall I will be able to loan you *quantum satis*.<sup>44</sup>

Dear Vera Nikolaevna [Blagovidova], thank you for your greetings. I am writing on behalf of the entire family: mother is in Moscow, and

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\*K. Groos, in his most recent work, in which he comes very close to the instrumental method, says that the discovery that rhythm (and wine) can produce ecstasy was just as important in the history of culture as the discovery of fire.—L.S.V.

my daughter is screaming bloody murder. I envy you with the blackest envy; especially for the wine. If you turn Alexander Romanovich into a drunkard,<sup>45</sup> I will attach myself to him twice as firmly, and then we will never be apart. Have a drink and relax. All the best!

Yours, LV

\* \* \*

**To G.I. Sakharova<sup>46</sup>**

**June 17, [19]28**

Dear Greta Issakovna, yesterday Vera Izrailevna<sup>47</sup> gave me your regards by telephone and made me wonderfully happy. It was with a very heavy feeling that I left the railroad station after your train departed. I was frightened for you. It seemed to me that we were wrong not to have prevented you from leaving for your work. Grief knocks a person off his feet, a person can be toppled over by grief, but we did not give you enough time to recover, to rest, to cope with your sorrow, and, unthinkingly, we all saw you off on a new and difficult task that requires both strength and, most important, a sense of calm, at least a measure of it.

I eagerly await your arrival.

I want to see you very much. I would be very happy if you would agree to spend the summer with us at the dacha outside Moscow; we would provide you with a separate room.

Nothing new here; I have not been notified of the finding of the commission<sup>48</sup> that questioned you and me.

Ivan Mikhailovich [Solov'ev] is grieving anew—his bother died; he had been ill with tuberculosis throughout the recent past. All three of us—Zankov, Solov'ev, and I—are still in the city, but in July we plan to move to the dacha outside Moscow. It would be nice if you could join us. I say this only in the event that you have not gone abroad or to stay with relatives or close friends somewhere.

I still have not been able to set about Leonid Solomonovich's work; grief torments me and prevents me from working. It also compels me to reach out to you, to think about you, to be with you or near you. I warmly shake your hand and await your arrival.

Sincerely yours, L. Vygotsky

\* \* \*

**To Five-Faced Kuz'ma Prutkov<sup>49</sup>**  
**Tashkent, April 15, 1929**

My dear friends, forgive me for answering you in prose in response to your verse and for being a bit overly serious and heavy in response to your jesting: after all, every jest contains a grain of seriousness, and I am responding only to that part of your message. I must admit, however, that I cannot quite compose any verse just now, and I am postponing a fitting response until I am able.

I read your booklet (with an elephant, instead of the monkey from the island of Tenerife) with enormous satisfaction; I would hope that my *Collected Works* someday brings each of you<sup>50.\*</sup> the same satisfaction.

On a serious note, let me say briefly that your last line says something that for me is now the main leitmotif of my entire state of health and "state of life": The road is a long one. . . .

I would never allow myself to speak so frankly (I have kept this leitmotif to myself) did I not feel that you, too, are beginning, from one angle, to appreciate the enormity of the path opening up before the psychologist who seeks to reconstruct the footsteps of the history of the mental psyche. This is new territory.

When I noticed this in you earlier, I was mainly surprised: to this day it strikes me as surprising that, under the circumstances and given that many outlines are still unclear, people who are only just choosing their path have embarked on this particular journey. I experienced a feeling of tremendous surprise when A.R. [Luria] was once the first to set out on this journey, when A.N. [Leontiev] followed him, and so forth. Now, to my surprise, there is the added joy that, based on the tracks that have been uncovered, not just myself alone and not just the three of us, but five more people see the grand avenue.

A sense of the enormity and massive scope of modern-day psychology (we are living in an era of geologic cataclysms in psychology)—this is my main feeling. But this makes the situation of those few who are pursuing the new avenue in science (especially in the science of man) an *extremely* responsible one that is serious in the highest degree and almost tragic (in the best and current, not pathetic, sense of that word).

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\*On account of Comrade Zaporozhets *alone*, you are having to change your entire clan.—L.S.V.

One has to check oneself a thousand times, to endure and withstand the test before making one's decision, because this is a very difficult path that demands a person's all.

I most cordially shake the hand of each one of you and that of Zaporozhets lastly, and I think that no matter where the path of each of you leads, no matter how the main question of Birnam Forest<sup>51</sup> is resolved, that I have set out for Dunsinane Castle<sup>52</sup> (a sign that the impossible comes true), and that you and I will maintain our personal goodwill and most genuine friendship under all circumstances.

Sincerely, L. Vygotsky

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**To A.N. Leontiev**  
**Tashkent, April 15, [19]29**

Dear Aleksei Nikolaevich, thank you very much for the letter. First and most important, we must conquer perception; we must conceptualize and grasp the *nature of perception by cultured men, of willful volitional perception* (compare with Jaensch's excellent article on why the verbs to see, to hear, and others are followed by the accusative case, i.e., as with verbs of motion).<sup>53</sup> For the most part, the path you write about is correct, but 1,001 questions and a lack of clarity reign in this regard for the present, although that is basically what we will have to clarify theoretically and heuristically by summer. Most important, we still do not have the connection; the integration of functions in the cultural sense is not the same as in the natural sense: attention + memory + perception, and so on and so forth.<sup>54</sup> The path itself, I repeat, is correct, and the idea is correct, in both theory and practice: *Either Montessori or S[enso-]M[otor System] culture* in the proper sense of the word (c-u-l-t-u-r-e).

As for practical matters, concerning Murashev's work,<sup>55</sup> I cannot yet say anything definite about this and I am putting it off in no uncertain terms until our meeting; if Murashev does not ask us in the first place, to hell with him; *if he does ask, let him wait for an answer—but no more than one and a half or two weeks after this letter* (I will be in Moscow on May 1–5). The complexity is threefold (which is why I am not giving a reply right away): (1) I fear a distortion of theory most of all; until the question is fully clear to me theoretically, I feel bound and

am afraid of putting it in the hands and mind of Murashev for completion; *I am proud that, for the understanding individual, everything in our theory is clear, and without confusion, exaggerations, verbal tricks, arbitrary assumptions, and the like.* (2) I fear a lack of clarity in practical matters—I refuse (categorically) to allow a clinic under the direction of Illiinskii-Savenko<sup>56</sup> and the blockhead from SPON<sup>57</sup> (I forgot his name) to elaborate on my topics; why would I leave the clinic if I believed for one minute that scientific work was possible there, and a connection with Kashchenko<sup>58</sup> and the rest! (“Murashev + Kashchenko = instrumental study of the sensomotory sphere”—that heading from your letter, and I consider it likely—terrifies me, it is worse than any ordeal!). So if Murashev says “but, but . . .,” let him wait a bit; this matter is important, and we cannot take a “whatever-you-say” attitude and give it to anyone who asks. (3) Most important, I want to convene a “conference” in spring or summer of people working with the instrumental method.<sup>59</sup> I am writing to A.R. [Luria] in more detail, and I am asking him to read it to you and discuss it with you before I come. *I want organization and clarity (a) in organizational matters, (b) in matters of principle, and (c) in programmatic questions.* The paradox of our situation is that topics that, in terms of their scope and content, need an institute are being studied by a narrow circle. I do not think that G.V. [Murashev] is going to engage in piracy, and if he does, he will not be the first and will not be the last. . . .

I am sincerely happy about your joys: The study of Korsakov’s psychosis<sup>60</sup> is *very* interesting; in general, pathology + cultural psychology (divergence) is the *principal* means of analysis (compare with the study of physical and mental disabilities); I have seen an excellent psychiatric hospital here. The instance involving natural memory is interesting too.

I cannot say anything about myself as yet. I am making preparations for work (a study); while staying at the hotel I have walked about the city, breathing in Central Asia—the sublime tatters of the East, its primitive state and ancient high culture. But at the center of all my interests is our problem, which alone offers the key to the psychology of man.—I heartily shake your hand. Greetings to M.P.<sup>61</sup> and to all of yours. All the best! Sincerely, LV

I am sending a little “luck” from the lilacs to you and to A.N. and M.P. [Leontiev]. LV

**To A.R. Luria**  
**[Tashkent], 14–18, [19]29<sup>62</sup>**

Dear A.R.! Please send the topics for the *graduate studies* on child development, psychology and education for the AKV or for MGU no. 2<sup>63</sup> (not all of them, but ten or so, as a sampling\*) to T.N. Barakova ([your package] is not going to reach me). She really needs them and implores you to do so. How are things with the apartment? I am doing some experiments, and I hope to bring some things. More important, I am drinking in the sun and Eastern dust. It is a blessed dust! What is going on back at home?

I shake your hand. Regards to our comrades!  
Sincerely, LV

\* \* \*

**To A.R. Luria**  
**[Tashkent], prior to May 5, [19]29<sup>64</sup>**

Dear A.R.!

Thank you very much for the second letter!

The work is especially interesting: It is *very* interesting; we will speak in person—I am now just outside of Tashkent. I intend to go to Moscow no later than May 2, so expect me two to three days after receiving this postcard. I shake your hand! Yours, LV

We are conducting some experiments, but I do not know whether they will be successful.

\* \* \*

**To A.N. Leontiev**  
**Moscow, July 2, [1929]<sup>65</sup>**

Dear A.N., although you adamantly refuse to accept any thanks, I *cannot* but thank you sincerely and warmly for the letter; that letter, along with the two conversations we held at the restaurant and at my place, gave

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\*Please get a copy from the administrative office.—L.S.V.

rise to that which I am now consumed with, preoccupied with, engaged in, excited about, and so forth. It also provides direction for the fall. Receiving letters like that one and [from] A.R. [Luria] in Tashkent is the best satisfaction. As you will recall, I am always talking about chimera\* and ideas.

Regarding official business. I will speak with Rudnik.<sup>66</sup> Zankov and Solov'ev are the most difficult part. There has been no response. They are coming again tomorrow. First they want everything to be at a single institution, and that it be a clinic if Zankov is to go there, and this greatly ties my research interests to practical issues, then they want to split the work among institutions. In a word, things are not going well. That is just between us. Nevertheless, a decision has to be made on this one way or the other. In one thing I support you to the end and see this as our salvation: maximum organizational clarity and tolerance. This is the guarantee both of the internal purity of our research and, the *suprema lex*,<sup>67</sup> of unsullied personal relationships (no secret grudges, dissatisfaction or circumvention). . . . Write me, and I will write too, *about your work and thoughts, and [about] the conference* (organizing our work in the future).

A.R. [Luria] received 200 dol[lars] from America and an invitation to the congress. I wrote him and *advised him to go*. Regards to yours.

Sincerely, L. Vygotsky.

I'll send Lévy-Bruhl<sup>68</sup> within the next few days!

\* \* \*

**To A.N. Leontiev**  
**Moscow, July 23, 1929**

[This letter is dated on the basis of the report on Luria's trip to the international congress of psychology in September 1929 and the letter's numerous overlapping points with the preceding letter to Leontiev.]

Dear Aleksei Nikolaevich, thank you for the letter. I wholeheartedly share your sentiments. There is some benefit to a situation in which

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\*Chimera is a horrible or unreal creature of the imagination. Traditionally, it is a mythological, fire-breathing creature commonly represented by a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail ([www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/chimera/](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/chimera/)).—Ed.

[Instrumental] P[sychology] winds up in the category of unprofitable pursuits. In particular, I cannot say strongly enough how highly I value (in ethical terms as well) the thought that the idea must be as pure and rigorous as possible. This is our principal task—to fight against muddled ideas and “making ourselves comfortable.” I am revising the s[econd] part of “monkey.”<sup>69</sup> Alas! The f[irst] chapter<sup>70</sup> is written *wholly* according to the Freudianists (and not even according to Freud, but according to V.F. Schmidt<sup>71</sup> (her materials), M. Klein<sup>72</sup> and ot[her] second-magnitude stars); then the impenetrable Piaget<sup>73</sup> is turned into an absolute beyond all measure; instrument and sign are mixed together even more, and so on and so forth. This is not the fault of A.R. [Luria] personally, but of the entire “epoch” of our thinking. We need to put a stop to this unrelentingly. Things that, from our point of view, are not yet clear in terms of *how* they should be refined in order to become an organic part of our theory should not be included in the system at all. Let us hold off. Let there be the most rigorous, monastic regime of thought; ideological seclusion, if necessary. And let us demand the same of others. Let us explain that studying cultural psychology is no joke, not something to do at odd moments or among other things, and not grounds for every new person’s own conjectures. Likewise the same organizational regimen externally. We must approach things in such a way that the mistakes of “monkey,” of A.R. [Luria’s] article, of Zankov’s parallelism, and so on become impossible. I will be happy if we can achieve maximum clarity and precision in this matter. I am counting firmly on your initiative and role in avoiding this. This is why the distressing situation with Zankov and Solov’ev has come about. There have been no talks, in the sense that I have discussed matters with them and sought agreements and such, but nor has there been any response. Zankov spoke the last time about taking part in the conference, while Solov’ev was opposed. But alas, only a minute later it became clear that Zankov, too, was contemplating such participation in a purely pro forma sense, saying that, for the purpose of a connection, he would say what he was going to do, and so on. In any case, this matter too must be closed in no uncertain terms by the fall. But *I must* (from a moral standpoint)\* open the doors wide to them, and hold them open until (1) they decide whether to join, and (2) the demands of my work

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\*In a moral sense, I hold them fully responsible for their departure from cultural psychology; *regardless of what they themselves might think of this*, all the other links are ours!—L.S.V.



allow me to wait no longer. That will occur in the fall.

With regard to external matters, nothing is reaching me. But (1) in all likelihood I will be elected to the clinic at MGU no. 1, and (2) they have initiated talks with me on a course (as a private lecturer) in the medical faculty for psychology at Gannushkin's clinic. If you were to apply to become an assistant, I would do this. We will talk about it in the fall. I have my *own* interest here (e.g., delirious speech with respect to the problem of meaning).

I am still staying at the dacha. I will be busy through August 1 with lucrative and hence pointless commissions. From August 1 through September 16, I will be reworking a history of cultural development at the dacha. From September 10 through October 1, I want to hold a conference and make preparations for winter. I want to concentrate all my endeavors around a single point. I will go to work on October 1. A.R. [Luria] is going to America. I am very happy for him and for us, if he does something for our idea. Meanwhile, the conference will be postponed to September 15–30. If you cannot complete it<sup>74</sup> by September 1, I do not think this will be a big problem. Just so a sizable part of the work is finished. Quality is more important than meeting deadlines! I will send Binet<sup>75</sup> and my lecture (i.e., everything on school-age child development)<sup>76</sup> in a few days, along with Levy-Bruhl.

Give my warm regards to M[argarita] P[etrovna] and Al. Aleks.<sup>77</sup> I thank you in advance for all of the manuscripts that N.V.<sup>78</sup> is providing to me. I will “dedicate” my next letter to my experiments and the problem of memory. Be sure to write. Sincerely yours, Vygotsky. Your observation on the custom of parting with the deceased is excellent (I know from experience). It is an entire program for contemplation and research.

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**To N.G. Morozova**  
**April 7, [19]30**

My dear Nataliia Grigor'evna, I received your letter only yesterday and felt once more how impossible and inadmissible it is for you and L.I. [Bozhovich] to remain in the same conditions. We eagerly await all good news from you. In the worst case, send a radio distress signal, like the SOS (Save our Souls) of sinking ships, and we will save your souls. . . . This is the second day of spring:

No matter how oppressive  
 Is the hand of fate,  
 What can resist the breath of  
 And that first encounter with spring . . . (Tiutchev)!\* This applies  
 fully to you and L.I. Please give her my warm regards. We await news.  
 Be strong.  
 Sincerely yours, LV

\* \* \*

**To N.G. Morozova**  
**Izmailovo Zoo, July 29, 1930**

Dear Nataliia Grigor'evna, your letter of July 18 just arrived. At first, I must admit, it frightened and alarmed me. Later, after thinking things over, I came to have a good understanding of the state in which you wrote it, and I was saddened to think that you are having to endure such states, perhaps even day after day. I am very familiar (as is everyone in equal measure) with those minutes and hours of powerlessness, of syncope\*\* of spirit and will, of deep bitterness—almost despair—when what is left of one's will is directed at escaping this state, of ridding oneself of it, of feeling if only mentally, in a volitional sense, outside of life, of leaving it all behind, as you wrote.

I have felt numbed by life, I know this feeling—as Fet speaks of another psychological variation of this state. These states unfold in their development from childhood, or, more precisely, from the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence and youth and, like all of the stages we go through, they remain in us in a convoluted form,\*\*\* [in order], at a moment of powerlessness, weakness of spirit, lack of will, to split off from our overall intellectual life and cast us far back,

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\*These lines from F.I. Tiutchev's poem "Spring" (1838) are quoted by Vygotsky apparently from memory, with inaccuracies in the punctuation.—Ed.

\*\*Syncope is the loss of one or more letters/sounds in the interior of a word.—Ed.

\*\*\*And in this convoluted form, forming the subsoil layer of our psyche, where waters pool and are purified, they serve as the nutrient medium from which many of the most profound decisions arise. *There* they are necessary. It is distressing when they are exposed and come to the surface, taking advantage of any fissures leading upward.—L.S.V.

deep into the past—to the still unreasonable and unfree, and thus elemental, strong, and overpowering, sadness of our adolescent years. All this should be clear to you, and you can attest to the truth of what I am saying and understand behind these dry words the essence of the mental state that has possessed you.

I think it was in this kind of state that you wrote the letter. And I also think you know you have to fight these states and that you can overcome them. A man vanquishes nature outside of himself, but also within himself; therein lie our psychology and ethics, do they not? So you can see that I do not object to your letter, although perhaps I do have one objection. It has to do with the collective. How can you say that we “will get along” without you, that the collective “will get along” too, that you are an individualist within the collective, and so forth. *All that is fundamentally untrue*. We will not get along without you, we cannot get along without you, the collective will not get along without you. Our collective, like any collective in the true sense of the word, does not negate individualism, but rests on it for support. Just as an organism relies on the organized cooperation of specialized and differentiated (i.e., individualized) organs. Indeed, the collective consists in the cooperation of individualities. The greater the number of these individualities and the more striking they are, the more they are suffused with self-knowledge—in other words, the more they are aware of themselves as personalities (and that is what individualism, properly understood, is), the greater the collective. Therefore, no matter how troubled you might be, no matter how much it might be “one thing after another,” always know and remember this: steadfastness and inexorability are things that everything one must have in this endeavor, a connection with others and with the cause. *Hier stehe ich*,<sup>79</sup> as Luther said. Every human being must know where he stands. You and I also know this, and we must stand firm.

And so this conclusion: You, not some[one] else, must record the reaction of choice, this chapter on a person’s developing freedom from the external coercion of things and their will. That is all. And now, if you agree with me, I urge you to write *concretely*, fully, in detail, without fear and embarrassment, about *what* you are experiencing, what troubles you, *what* is not going well, *what* happened and *how*, what brings on despair. I very much await this, and you have my complete attention.

Sincerely yours, L. Vygotsky

**To A.N. Leontiev  
Izmailovo Zoo, July 31, 1930**

[The text of the letter is damaged in many places.]

Dear Aleksei Nikolaevich, I wrote a post[card] to you several days ago at the address Nik[olai] VI[adimirovich] gave me, but there was none of the unrivaled *chakva*<sup>80</sup> you emphasize so much in your letter at that address [illegible], partly a response to your letter, which arrived yesterday, compels me to write you again.

First, business. Shein<sup>81</sup> took your manuscript<sup>82</sup> from me, citing [illegible]; I [illegible] was prepared to part with it in about two weeks. I will need it again later for reflection and the preface. Then I was at GIZ in person, since both Iakobson<sup>83</sup> let me know and they themselves called Nik. Vla. [Leontiev] about the need to clarify the time frame for turning in the preface. I found out that the book is “scheduled” for the four[th] quarter, and that I can hand in the preface in September; they made a note of that and calmed down. And that was it. Alas, I *still* cannot rid myself of incidental [illegible], unproductive petty chores. Nevertheless, I am hurriedly trying to finish everything. And starting tomorrow, from August 1 to September 1, I intend to put aside my work wholly and completely and to reflect, read, and wander about. I am very jealous of the fact that you are surrounded by palms, tea, and flowers. The South has been my dream<sup>84</sup> since my high school years (for I, like most admirers of Mayne Reid and Cooper, performed all my heroic deeds at the age of ten to twelve in subtropical surroundings). But for now I must be content with Izmailovo. But thank you very much for the descriptions, several lines of them. It is consoling. Now as regards the book and the state of affairs with our idea<sup>85</sup> for the summer of 1930 (you and I shall assess the results, as well as the outlook, this summer). From the standpoint of contemporary idealistic psychology (which, of course, is partially correct *in one thing*, and will contribute that small part to a future integrated psychology), so-called *verstehende Psychologie*,<sup>86</sup> for which the purpose of psychology is to understand, not explain, the ideal is empathy, sympathy, psychological resonance in oneself, and so on—I understand full well your feelings [illegible] “after the book.” But from the viewpoint of our psychology, for which you are a subject, not an object, *you are incorrect*. Allow me to say this to you in all frankness (I do this especially boldly [illegible] because I sense your state quite clearly and

understand it). “A mountain brought forth a mouse”—this is how you see your book. I know the kind of lamenting you speak of for the ideas that are not embodied in the book, that stand outside it and await their embodiment in the future. But I would turn this comparison around—and it would be closer to the truth: your book is a mountain brought forth by a mouse. This is so. When I recall what it started from, what it grew out of, *how* the card was first used for remembering, how for the first time, the indistinct, undifferentiated haze of the main idea gave rise to the *new approach to memory embodied in your book*. Our writings are imperfect, but the truth contained within them is great. This is my symbol of faith in the [illegible] new truth: compared with its inexhaustible and enormous importance (just think of it—the truth about memory!), your book is a mouse, but it incorporates the main part, the core of that importance, and that part is a mountain. *We cannot even make inferences about ourselves subjectively*: Our [illegible] deceive us. The whole question is one of [illegible]: Is this book truly a mountain? I answer unconditionally in the affirmative. This is my conviction. As Luther said, *Hier stehe ich*—I stand on this, and woe to he who [gap in text] your book. And you must realize this, because this is not a personal issue of your own, it is not a personal question [illegible]; it is not a personal issue at all, but a question of thinking, a philosophical question, an event of enormous significance in the sphere of scientific thinking about human psychology. [The letter is broken off at this point.]

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**To N.G. Morozova**  
**August 19, 1930**

My dear Natal'ia Grigor'evna, I think that time is gaining the upper hand, and that this letter will find you in a better frame of mind. After receiving your letter, I became even more confirmed in my view that you have been overtaken by fatigue, a kind of mental syncope, a loss of mental energy. It is not hard to emerge from this state: you must give yourself physical and psychological rest, and you must not allow the first desires and thoughts that come along to gain power over you. The rule here (in the psychological battle and in subjugating unruly and strong opponents to your power) is the same as it is in any kind of subjugation:

*divide et impera*, or divide and conquer. Specifically, you must not let it be “one thing after another;” you must not allow the most varied desires and thoughts that seek to take control over us to join forces and become one big mass. You must divide them (consciously); to overcome—this is no doubt the most appropriate word with regard to mastering one’s emotions. For a person who knows the “magic of verse” (others’ and one’s own) and how truth is arrived at through scientific study (through *what kind of* human self-denial, through the subordination of all to the basic core of the individual), finding the way out is simply a question of psychological effort. I am convinced that you will make this effort and will find the way out: it stands before you—more precisely, it is in you (i.e., in a continuation of the creative journey, in remaining true to the best part of your being). Cast off the despondency, read slowly and over and over Pushkin’s “faded joy of heedless years,” which cleanses and enlightens, and grab hold of the one main thread of your entire life: your primary pursuit and principal task, your work. After you have rested, needless to say. Know that all of us are totally with you (and let me say for myself that I will be with you always and everywhere). Get well. [The letter is broken off at this point.]

### **To A.R. Luria**

**[Moscow] June 1, 1931**

[This letter and Vygotsky’s next several letters to Luria were written during the latter’s stay in Central Asia as a participant in two ethnopsychological surveys (see A.R. Luria, *Etapy zhiznennogo puti* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 47–69; and also Luria’s *Ob istoricheskom razvitii poznavatel’nykh protsessov* (Moscow, 1974).]

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I have been quite unable to sit down and write you a letter. I have been so preoccupied with tasks that I cannot set aside an hour for myself. I have firmly decided that this is the last year things will be this way. Here is the news over the month you have been absent, with a breakdown into paragraphs and numbered items.

§ 1. The discussion<sup>87</sup> keeps being postponed. It has not been held because it was interrupted by Zalkind’s discussion<sup>88</sup> and then by the psychology congress.<sup>89</sup> Even now no date has been set. It will apparently take place in June. The auspices<sup>90</sup> are the same as when you were here. Our decision is unshakeable. § 2. I discussed your letter<sup>91</sup> with Navinskii,<sup>92</sup>

Kal'man<sup>93</sup> (at the congress in Leningrad), and Zalkind. They all say the letter is a very good one and will go through without any comments or stipulations. You can prepare the next one, because it appears that an article against us will appear there as well. § 3. I was at the congress in Leningrad and delivered a report.<sup>94</sup> They did not attack me, apparently because I am not of their parish, and any attacks needed to focus on another department. Our comrades from Samarkand will tell you about the congress. I conducted myself the way we had planned things here. I do not regret having gone and given the report. What can it hurt? § 4. I received a letter from Kazanin<sup>95</sup> saying that my article<sup>96</sup> will be published. § 5. At the psychology institute, the methodology for our brigade has been postponed until fall. I am convinced that the directors' minds are blank on this score. They will prepare the manual<sup>97</sup> by fall—and it will serve simultaneously, it appears, as a work program. I will conduct a seminar now and then and perform two or three experiments, and that is it. The institute, it seems, will break apart into its component parts. The disarray there is awful. At the clinic,<sup>98</sup> poor G.V.<sup>99</sup>—things are in such a sheer and utter mess that there is just no word for it. We need to stay far away from such institutes. § 6. At the congress in Leningrad, Rokhlin<sup>100</sup> spoke with me coolly. He will apparently find out how we [illegible word]. He asked me to come. To deliver a report (undergo a test). I will go with A.N. [Leontiev] in June. My intentions are the same. If they firmly promise everything we need, we will go without hesitation. § 7. Overall, the auspices are better than they were when you were here. The symptoms: (a) BSE<sup>101</sup> has been continually requesting an article “Emotions + Eidetism,” and I have continually refused; (b) T.L. Kogan<sup>102</sup> asked me to tell you that you will be officially included on the psychology editorial board; (c) Leontiev is being urged to go to the institute; (d) Kal'man and company spoke with me graciously about you, your letter, and so on; (e) During the Leningrad congress, Talankin<sup>103</sup> delivered a report in the child development section on the situation on the psychological front: as for us—culture in place of labor, no unity of the individual but rather a multilayered arrangement, instrumentalism (there is still no trend toward one or the other), we are being led by the nose by European psychology, and our psychology is non-Marxist,<sup>104</sup> but compared with the rest we are the best and closest, we must be given help in a manner of comradeship in overcoming [illegible word], and so on and so forth. Since this is official, (1) it predetermines the course of discussion—to

beat, but not beat to death; (2) it is being disseminated in this same version by all the congress delegates in a circular fashion, it is your official evaluation in Samarkand. § 8. We have gotten down to work—that is the most important thing! It is incredibly difficult to rectify what has been destroyed.<sup>105</sup> But with some difficulty, we have nonetheless managed to break the deadlock. We have chosen our topics. We are awaiting the [illegible] of the conference.<sup>106</sup> [R.E.] Levina has gone to the NKS's<sup>107</sup> P[ediatric] Pre[ventive Care] Out[-Patient Clinic] in Kursk with a topic. § 9. I myself am still a prisoner to the SD.<sup>108</sup> June is my last month of work. I want to rest over July and August. § 10. About you. How is your work going, how are your associates? Be careful with people—beware and do not be gullible. Do you have a personal address other than at the institute? How are you feeling? Be absolutely calm, and confident about our work and our direction.

Your comments about my book<sup>109</sup> made me incredibly happy. I know that it is bad, but given your pessimism (“we have done nothing”), I am pleased that you see the path and its enormous promise. I will write about our affairs next time (about the money, the books, etc.). I will deposit the money with VARNITSO<sup>110</sup>—let me know the amount of the monthly salary.

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**Moscow, June 12, 1931**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I am once again writing after a delay. I just cannot break free of a multitude of unnecessary tasks. First, regarding the work. I am *very* glad that you have gone to work with fervor, that you see a reason for it, a goal, its importance.<sup>111</sup> I am also glad for you, because it is not enough to simply take a break from life in Moscow and to regain one's strength; one also needs to strengthen oneself inwardly and acquire indestructible internal supports, and this can be provided only by creative work. For this reason, your letters are simply delightful, cheerful, and encouraging impressions for me against the backdrop of my hapless bustle. The fact is that I regard your topic as profoundly interesting and feasible and see it as one that advances our cause. The illustrations are very interesting. I shared them with my comrades at a meeting of the laboratory. Perception in the Rorschach, Kohs, and even



Rupp<sup>112</sup> experiments is extremely interesting. Please write me about your next experiments in equal detail. I read out your letter (the part about the experiments) at the meeting. Everyone was glad to see that you are once again back at work in both mind and heart and doing research. That is the most important consideration, and it is all but everything. Against my own will, my advice regarding the study of the meaning of words is very dry and meager: what can I say before having thought things over? Nevertheless: (1) a selective test—something is called such-and-such because (1) . . . (2) . . . (3) . . . (4) . . .—could be *quite* interesting, and (1), (2), (3), and (4) should include mentions. . . .

(I am sitting down to continue this letter for the third time, on June 16, with the firm intention of completing it, albeit in a somewhat abbreviated form) . . .—the causes of similarity of sound—attributes, connections with other things, random motives, perhaps “that is what people call it.” (2) Clinical conversations à la Piaget—in order to clarify the *clinical picture* of thinking about words and the names of objects. (3) Name changes and a discussion using these changed meanings. (4) Finally, meanings *outside of words*—a game, as with [N.G.] Morozova. That is all I can say about this right now. Zeigarnik<sup>113</sup> has arrived. At the laboratory meeting on the tenth, she presented a report on some new studies (Hoppe’s<sup>114</sup> success and nonsuccess, Sättigung,<sup>115</sup> the switching of Spannung<sup>116</sup> to other pathways—the problem of Ersatz<sup>117</sup> in satisfying needs). It was good. Refined. Clever. A bit of a woman’s needlework. Very much in the style of Lewin.<sup>118</sup> She’s going to present another report to us tomorrow. What about her work? She wants to go (1) to a clinic, (2) to an institute, (3) into pedagogical work. At the clinic, Sapir<sup>119</sup> has become intolerable, it is neither yes nor no. He sets up tests for her. I advised her not to wait or to expect much. She wants to work where we are. A true thought: Birnbaum, she, Kazmin<sup>120</sup> + us—now that is a force to be reckoned with. But where will we be? At the institute she has been assigned to the perceptions section. But both she and Birnbaum are *appalled* by what is actually being done there, and by the atmosphere. Where can pedagogical work be found? In general, this coming fall is the least clear of all of them. What is your view of this? After we have decided her fate I will write you. There still has not been any discussion of our reports,<sup>121</sup> I do not know why. Zalkind’s discussion is coming to a close. In what and how I do not know. I wrote about the journal and your letter and telegraphed you. And about the symptoms<sup>122</sup> too. Our work is going neither well nor badly—it is mediocre. It has been very difficult to focus

after what happened (since the breakup).<sup>123</sup> But we are working, and we will complete our small tasks. Levina is content in Kursk. I am still beset with thousands of petty chores. The fruitlessness of what I do greatly distresses me. My scientific thinking is going off into the realm of fantasy, and I cannot think things through in a realistic way to the end. Nothing is going right: I am doing the wrong things, writing the wrong things, saying the wrong things. A fundamental reorganization is called for—and this time I am going to carry it out. I received a book on Aristotle's and Galileo's thinking<sup>124</sup> in psychology from Lewin. He has an amazing mind. Hence, the clearer the dividing line between our thinking, which is *new* for modern-day psychology.<sup>125</sup> Incidentally, it is now possible again to subscribe to foreign books through the TsEKOBU.<sup>126</sup> What should I order for you, and how? I paid VARNITSO on your behalf. The accounts with you are long: I received the honorarium for Charlotta Bühler<sup>127</sup> as a loan. I also owe for the translation. By the way, where is the article on practical intellect for America<sup>128</sup>—Gita Vasil'evna [Birnbau] does not have it, I asked her. How are things going with the article for Gasilov?<sup>129</sup>

A few trifles: I received your book (Bleuler)<sup>130</sup> from Urkin<sup>131</sup>—Leontiev has it. I will bring the shoes (I tried them on, but they do not come together when I tie them) to your apartment soon and pick up the books and manuscripts. I called your people regarding the response from *Estestvoznaniie i Marksizm*.<sup>132</sup> About Kharkov. Rokhlin did not see me in Moscow. He spoke at the congress in Leningrad. He invited me to go [to Kharkov] *with* Talankin to deliver a report. He insisted on sending money. As if he were afraid (he says this) that I would go *only and specifically* with regard to the fall. I did not go with Talankin. I turned down the money. I also want to decline the report. But what surprised me was (1) the cool attitude toward the cause, compared with Geimanovich,<sup>133</sup> and (2) the fact that he and the secretary of their cell (pure *Zucker*)<sup>134</sup> spoke as though nothing had been settled, that they would have to go to the People's Commissariat<sup>135</sup> again. "We will do everything to ensure the success of the *practical* side of your trip," he writes, so the matter definitely has not been decided yet. It is strange. I do not know what the hold-up is: temperament, Sancho-like<sup>136</sup> indecision and cowardice, an effort to play it safe, or something else. In any case, A.N. [Leontiev] and I will *fly* there in the next few days (no later than the twentieth through the twenty-fifth) and will immediately telegraph the result to you.

Where are you spending your vacation? Is the heat rather oppressive?

Please write! I will be free soon and will write you in detail. I shake your hand and kiss you.\* Sincerely yours, LV

P.S. I do not remember if I wrote you that (1) you have been included in the *Psikhologiia* editorial board,<sup>137</sup> and (2) I received a letter from Kazanin.<sup>138</sup> I also got a book from Jaensch.<sup>139</sup>

\* \* \*

**To R.E. Levina**  
**June 16, [19]31**

I received your letter, dear Roza Evgen'evna, and I am answering it immediately, since it arrived on a day I do not have to work. I have had a chance to think it over and to ponder my response.

The Samarkand incident is potentially very sad. You wanted so much to go somewhere where life itself, not just your work, would be new, educational, and invigorating. But Kursk is not bad. You will soon be able to leave the place, having completed your institutional work assignment.<sup>140</sup> The things that you write about your work gave me sad thoughts about what is currently being done where you are in the name of child development. The trouble is not remoteness or primitiveness; the trouble lies in falsehood, in lies, in sham work. But that is not all, of course. There are kernels of honesty and truth in any work, and we have to look at them above all. Such kernels are also no doubt present in your work in Kursk. Furthermore, it is, of course, necessary to pursue research that would nourish and instruct you and provide you with something to live and breath, and that would be necessary objectively—that is, that would lead to truth.

It is difficult to work after an interruption. But everyone is doing something. The last meeting of the laboratory and tomorrow's meeting are devoted to a discussion with Zeigarnik on studies at the University of Berlin. I received Lewin's new book on the methodological problem of psychology. Everything I see tells me that something great is happening in (world) psychology before our very eyes. To fail to sense this or to belittle the importance of what is going on in these passionate, tragic attempts to find the pathway to the study of the mind, which lie at the

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\*In Russian it is common to close letters with phrases such as "I kiss you" or "I embrace you."—Ed.

heart of the crisis (e.g., to simply speak of confusion in psychology, to say that it is not a science, etc.) is to take a Philistine view of things and of the history of human thought.

In general, we will cope with our small task. But the question of the fall arises. Where should we work, on what, and how? To all appearances, A.N. [Luria] and I will go to Kharkov soon. But it is unlikely that everything will work out there. We will most likely spend the fall in Moscow. My thoughts are directed toward the search for a peripheral laboratory and toward concentrating everyone there for a pooled effort.

Now, as for the other topic you write about. About inner troubles and life's hardships. I just reread (almost by accident) Chekhov's "Tri goda" [Three Years]. You should read it too. That is life. It is deeper and broader than its outward expression. Everything about it is in flux. Everything evolves. The most important thing, now and always, is not to equate life with its outward expression, period. Then, when you heed life (and this is the most important virtue, a somewhat passive attitude at first), you will find within yourself, outside of yourself and in all things so much that none of us could contain it inside ourselves. It is, of course, impossible to live without having a concept in life in an intellectual sense. Without philosophy (one's own personal philosophy of life) there can be nihilism, cynicism, suicide, but not life. But the fact is that everyone has a philosophy. Apparently, you have to cultivate it within yourself, to give it free range within yourself, because it sustains the life within us. Then there is art—for me, poetry, for another, music. Then there is work. Which can cause a person seeking truth to waver. How much inner light, warmth, and support there is in the actual search itself. And then there is the most important thing—life itself—the sky, sun, love, people, suffering. All of these things are not just words, they exist. This is authentic. This is interwoven into life. Crises are not a temporary state, but the path to one's inner life. When we shift from systems to fates (it is frightening and delightful to utter that word, knowing that tomorrow we are going to probe what lies behind it) to the inception and destruction of systems, we will see this with our own eyes. I am certain of it. In particular, all of us, peering into our past, see that we are drying up. And indeed we are. This is so. To develop is to die. This becomes especially acute at watershed periods—with you, and at my age again. Dostoevsky spoke with anguish of the drying up of the heart. Gogol is even more terrifying. This is indeed a "small death" in us. And this is how we should accept

it. But behind all of this stands life—that is, motion, travel, one’s fate. (Nietzsche taught *amor fati*—love of fate.)

But I have gotten carried away with philosophizing here. . . . I am familiar with and understand your states and—forgive me for being presumptuous—some of the things behind them are clear: I have here a certain amount of experience with these things. I am not exactly trying to say that everything will pass. No, I am talking about what lies beyond them, beyond their relative importance. Beyond these things are life and work—for us, that is, our work to reveal truth. These are not high-flown words like “fate.” These are things that should become ordinary. I saw prof[essor Ie.A.] Arkin a few days ago. I learned that Gr[igori] Ef[imovich Arkin] is doing rather well. I sent him some books, my greetings and a letter. Please give my heartfelt regards to Lidia Il’inichna [Bozhovich] and her son. And if her husband is with her—to him! He takes us seriously. At a very unsuccessful time, I fear.

Please write me. Among other things, we will continue our discussion of the main topic.

All the best. Sincerely, L. Vygotsky

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**June 20, [1931]**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, your Report no. 2<sup>141</sup> was just delivered to me. I read it with tremendous delight and am hurrying to send a brief response. All the things you report are extremely important and interesting; this is now the best part of our work—and *a new* part in the best sense, in that it does not repeat what we already know but moves all the work forward and raises our older studies (for example, the problem of types of connections in mediated memory and thought) to the highest level. The *experiments with colors*<sup>142</sup> made the strongest impression on me. This is amazing and extremely valuable. Let us compare it with *Farbennamnesie*<sup>143</sup> and the breakdown of ideas (= categorical thinking). Another comparison: in Leningrad, as [illegible], I had an opportunity to study the report of the last [illegible] survey,<sup>144</sup> including the article by Eliasberg,<sup>145</sup> to which you called my attention, in synopsis form, owing to the criticism of Stern’s<sup>146</sup> four stages in the description of children’s pictures. In

general, this viewpoint, clearly presented, is absolutely alien to us, and it is so easy to dismiss it and distance ourselves from it. This—like Folkelt's chimpanzee—is [*in aller Ewigkeit*]<sup>147</sup>; the assertion that a child has two minds, one his own and the other social; everything that a child receives from the speech of adults—*das alles ist möglich [für das Kind]*.<sup>148</sup> In general, it is Piaget sharpened to a point (incidentally, that article helped me in writing the preface to Piaget.<sup>149</sup> But there are some correct aspects too—methodologically—in the way the question is framed, which is close to what I have often said: What *would* children's speech be if a child did not find ready words attached to specific meanings, but instead freely constructed the meanings of words and freely generalized them. This is allowed, and so on, by *autonome Kindersprache*.<sup>150</sup> He writes beautifully about colors. Stumpf's<sup>151.\*</sup> son, who created his own independent speech, called the color green different things (i.e., he had different words for it), depending on the backdrop against which he encountered the color. *A normal child has great difficulty, as a rule, with the designations of colors when he has known these colors for a long time.* One of the few cases (perhaps the only one) in which a child who could *already speak well* and who could *distinguish* colors well was not also able to speak *well* about colors. The observations of Stumpf's son provide the key to *Farbennamenamnesie* (a special chapter in the study of neurological diseases). The account of the Gelb and Goldstein<sup>152</sup> case, indicating that the disorder is not in the sphere of speech per se, but in the semasiological (meaning) sphere, that the categorical function is impaired. Only a high degree of abstraction leads to the absolute designation of color. I write this in order to demonstrate the *crucial* importance of your experiments. The child, the aphasic, Stumpf's son—and the *primitive*; in other words, the experiments provide the answer: *What* in phylogenesis (historical development) leads to the development of naming colors. *In this sense, color is an extremely advantageous object.* (By the way, a self-diagnosis: I do not have just color blindness, but specifically primitivism of color perception.)<sup>153</sup>

The geometric figures yield a *brilliant* result if (1)  $\Delta \neq$  (2)  $\Delta$ .

The thinking about *Gestalttheorie*<sup>154</sup> is profound and correct; apparently, the natural mechanisms are not all that natural. I am *literally delighted*

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\*Perhaps we need to search out and study this (old) article by Stumpf.—L.S.V.

with the data on illusions (what kind? Could you give an example and describe part of the experiment, as in the first two cases?); there is something simpler here; in other words, understanding is preceded by another systemic shift, but apparently of the *same* fundamental nature.

I wrote you earlier about the meanings of words: This is immensely valuable; the same is true of metaphors. I obtained *exactly the same thing* with deaf mutes a few days ago: They can understand familiar phrases and sayings, but they cannot understand them in translation. Finally, the experiments with memory are once again *extremely* important, if it is confirmed that, for a primitive, it is possible to remember only something certain and plausible. That is all. Generally speaking, excellent! The best of the year. The road to the future. It makes up for the six months that were lost. It is our golden reserve of experiments that are opened directly by the theoretical key. Keep up your work and write me. I will read your letter to all. *It is a marvelous letter.*

I am not going to write about any business matters. Be calm. I will take care of everything. We are going to Kharkov in a few days. We will finish our work over the next several days, by July 1. I do not know when I will take a vacation or where I will go. I will write you. Take care of yourself! Keep up the good work and write me! Sincerely yours, LV

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**July 11, 1931**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I am writing you literally [in] *emphasia*,<sup>155</sup> in a kind of fervor that I rarely experience. I received Report no. 3 and the records of the experiments. I cannot remember the last time I have had such a bright and cheery day. This is literally like a key that opens the locks on a number of psychological problems. That is my impression. To me, the first-ranking importance of the experiments is beyond doubt; our new direction has now been conquered (by you) not just in theory, but in practice—experimentally. As soon as I find out your address, I will write you a detailed response; as things stand I am not sure that a postcard will reach you; I also wrote you in Samarkand after Report no. 4, and I sent a detailed response after Report no. 2, but I do not know if they reached you. A new chapter in psychology is now open to us, a concrete chapter; the

operations themselves, *resp.*,<sup>156</sup> the individual functions now emerge in a new light against the backdrop of the comprehended whole. I have a sense of gratitude, joy, and pride. I am leaving on vacation on the first, please write me at my old address. [At the top of the postcard, in pencil]: Not the psychology of individual operations, but the psychology of the systems.

Write me. I shake your hand. Sincerely yours, LV

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**Iartsevo Station, August 1, [19]31**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I am writing you a post[card] because it is impossible to get an envelope here or gum arabic in order to make one. Earlier I sent you letters to Samarkand and Fergana about the *enormous, totally incomparable* impression that your Reports and records have had on me. This is a huge, decisive, *pivotal* step in our research toward a new viewpoint. But even in *any* context of European research, such a survey would be an *event*. This study will be your trip to Tenerife.<sup>157</sup> I am experiencing a feeling of elation—in the literal sense of the word—of being on the brink of a major internal success. I received Report no. 5, and it too, like all the rest (I was less enthusiastic about Report no. 1), marks an event: a systematic study of systemic relations in historical psychology, in living phylogenesis, something that no one has ever done before, from whatever viewpoint. For our clinic and our experiments with children, this is a new, unexpectedly (for me, I admit) joyful and *brilliant* chapter.

[In the margin]: I cannot write anything about myself after the experiments. On July 17, in what came as a surprise even to myself, I went to Iartsevo, near Smolensk, where I am going to stay through September 1. Then, it is on to Moscow. When will you be coming? My address is the same (they forward things to me). Lewin writes that he may come to Moscow<sup>158</sup> in the fall for the congress (September 8). I have not received a final response from Rokhlin in Kharkov. The trip is postponed until the fall. Write me. Sincerely yours, LV

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**To A.N. Leontiev**  
**Iartsevo Station, August 1, 1931**

Dear A.N., in something that came as a surprise even to myself, an opportunity arose on July 17 for me to flee Moscow (as you rightly described your own departure for vacation), and I fled that very same day. I am now passing my time outside Smolensk at a little town and small train station. Your postcard was forwarded to me here. Thank you very much for the invitation: I too feel the *need* for an extended and unhurried exchange of views, undisturbed by any extraneous affairs. The year's results are exceedingly lamentable, and the outlook for next year is exceedingly vague. The picture is relieved by the *extraordinary, unexpected, and quite fortunate* successes achieved by A.R. [Luria], who has accomplished more than we have this whole year. How I will spend my summer is not yet clear, and that, in turn, will determine my coming. I will come to see you\* upon my very next trip to Moscow, as [soon as] the director of the institute<sup>159</sup> for whom I have been standing in (which has prevented any absences from Moscow on my part) returns on August 1. Have you managed to subscribe to books from TsEKUBU? With the help of Al. Val. [Zaporozhets], I also subscribed for Al. Rom. [Luria]. Do not let the subscription period slip by; make sure you subscribe, even if through someone else (through Al. VI. or somebody else).

Be well. Sincerely, Vygotsky.

Regards to M[argarita] P[etrovna]

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**June 26, [19]32**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I am still in Moscow and still do not know whether an operation will be done this summer or in the fall. I have grasped from the doctors' comments and intonation that I will apparently be unable to avoid it. I am staying at the clinic for a few days to decide the matter.

Everything here is the same. I received a VARNITSO card and arranged

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\*I'll send you a telegram.—L.S.V.

everything. Give my regards to Koffka,<sup>160</sup> Shemiakin,<sup>161</sup> L. Mardkovich<sup>162</sup> and the other comrades who know me.

I presented a report on *sch*,<sup>163</sup> and in that regard I would like to talk some things over with you—many things. Please write me about your experiments, and conduct them with all confidence in their great objective importance and their special significance for us. I shake your hand. Sincerely yours, L. Vygotsky.

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**[Iartsevo] July 13, 1932**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I received your Uzbek and bird, thank you. I am in Iartsevo: My wife came down with dysentery, and I had to come here quickly, putting aside all my unfinished work in Moscow. They ultimately postponed the operation; they might do it in mid-summer, perhaps in the fall. I underwent some deep cauterizations, which yielded no result in either the doctors' view or my own opinion. In general, everything remains vague and unclear. Especially with regard to my work this winter. And that is the most important thing. From an inward standpoint, everything has been clarified conclusively—more than is necessary for my work. I am expecting *quite a lot* of you (no matter how blindly, so to speak, the experiments proceed), because to think while experimenting is to think more productively, even when making mistakes. And you are on the right path, as am I and as is A.N. [Leontiev]; he does not grasp, in part even deliberately, the new *distinction* in the experiments, but he is drawing that distinction in his research on practical intellect from *connections* with speech and *changes* in them, on changes from the end to the beginning—which is what systemic dynamics is. Give my regards to Koffka, Shemiakin, and the other comrades. When can I expect letters with the reports, and you? I shake your hand. Sincerely, LV. Greetings to Lenechka. I presented the report on *sch*, I will write you about it in more detail in the next few days.

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**Iartsevo, August 17, [19]32**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, they just delivered your Report on the survey, with which I was delighted. The findings alone of the two expeditions, if they were to be published in a European language in a systematic form available to researchers, would merit world renown; I am convinced of that. That is an outward assessment. As for my inward assessment, I have shared it with you many times: I continue to think and will continue to think, until I am persuaded otherwise, that there is now *experimental proof* (proof based on factual material, material *richer* than in *any* ethnopsychological study, and *purer* and more correct than Lévy-Bruhl, for the phylogenetic existence of a level of comprehensive thinking, of a *different* structure, independent of it, of all the principal systems of the psyche, of all the major types of activity, and eventually of consciousness itself. Surely that is not so little as to be dissatisfied with the outcome of the two trips. Please inform me of your plans—when we will meet. I will be coming to Moscow no later than the thirtieth or thirty-first. I warmly shake your hand, embrace you, and congratulate you. Yours, LV

**To A.R. Luria**  
**March 29, [19]33**

Dear Alexander Romanovich. Unfortunately, I cannot report anything definite to you. The external data attest to the status quo.<sup>164</sup>

The commission<sup>165</sup> has not completed its work. It is awkward for me to ask detailed questions, since in everyone's eyes I have a vested interest. But I know from what Propper<sup>166</sup> has said that no one has any thought of completely stopping the work, so the conclusions are likely to be such that the work can go on. That is just speculation, however. But here is a fact: [NN], saving his belly and playing the role of plainclothes detective, no doubt about it, has come out with a *militant report*, as he himself described it, against your report. This comes too quickly, but in fact it is very much to be expected. The sooner you rid yourself of illusions about those people and others, the better. It is downright vile from a human standpoint to compare the presentations by [NN] and company after your report and now. The further away those cowardly

barbers, clerks, accountants, and whatever else they might be, although they certainly are not psychologists or people of science, are from our ideas, the better. We can be at ease. As soon as I learn something, I will write you immediately. But I think we can calmly await the end of this story, because for us its outcome is predetermined: *nothing* from the psychology institute.

I will write you regarding my arrival once things are clear. I have not yet received any money for February and March. I paid your 150 rubles to SOTsEGIZ.<sup>167</sup> I am *very happy* about your experiments with AVrch<sup>168</sup>—this is solid, this is scientific, this will not disappoint. Take care of yourself. I embrace you. Sincerely yours, LV

Give my best to AIV and T.Os.<sup>169</sup>

\* \* \*

**To A.N. Leontiev**  
**Taininskaia, August 2, 1933**

Dear Aleksei Nikolaevich! I kept intending to forward a letter through A.R. [Luria], but we never saw each other before his departure. Hence the delay. I have felt on more than one occasion that we are standing, as it were, on the brink of some sort of very important discussion for which both of us, it seems, are still unprepared and therefore we have a poor understanding of what it should consist. But we have now seen the summer lightning of this many times, including in your last letter. For this reason, I cannot but respond to it with the same sort of summer lightning, something akin to a (vague) premonition of a future conversation. Your external fate will apparently be decided in the fall—for a number of years. And at the same time—ours (and my own) fate in part, the fate of our cause. However subjectively you might endure your “exile” to Kharkov,<sup>170</sup> whatever joys it might offer in compensation (in the past and even more so in the future), your final departure—objectively, in terms of its real inner meaning—is an internal, grave, and perhaps irreparable setback for us, a setback stemming from our delusions and outright neglect of the task entrusted to us. It seems that what occurred once will never recur either in your biography or mine, or in the history of our psychology. Still, I am trying to understand all this in a Spinoza-like fashion—with sorrow, but as something necessary. In my own thoughts, I proceed from this

as from an existing fact. One's inward destiny cannot but be decided in association with one's outward destiny, but it is not, of course, decided by it completely. For that reason, it is not clear to me, it is hazy, my view of it is obscured, and it worries me with the greatest worry I have experienced in recent years. But given that your inner position, as you write, has now crystallized in a personal and scientific sense, the outward decision is also predetermined to a certain degree. You are right in saying that you must first rid yourself of the need to act deceptively. It would be possible to do this—by means of “abstracting” (à la Kharkov) or “fission” (à la Moscow)—irrespective of the external conditions of any of us. I therefore think he is right, despite the fact that I assess everything that happened with A.R. [Luria]<sup>171</sup> differently (and not in a favorable sense). But we will talk about that separately at some point.

I know and consider it proper that inwardly you have traversed the (final) road to maturity over the past two years. From the bottom of my heart, as I would wish good luck to a most intimate friend at some decisive moment, I wish you strength, courage, and clarity of mind as you stand before this decision with regard to your path in life. Most important, make this decision *freely*. Your letter breaks off on that note, and so I shall break off mine on that note too—albeit without any external reason. I firmly, firmly shake your hand. With all my heart, yours, L. Vygotsky.

I do not know whether I will go to Tarusa. I will do so only if our discussion ripens, and if I decide to give it an outlet. Why go otherwise? Give my best to M[argarita] P[etrovna] and A.R. [Luria] and his wife.

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**To A.R. Luria**  
**Moscow, November 21, [19]33**

Dear Alexander Romanovich, I received your letter of [November?] 17 *pm*,<sup>172</sup> but first about our business in Moscow. I was summoned by Mitin<sup>173</sup> quite unexpectedly. He spoke with me about the situation in psychology and child development. He asked if a history of child intellectual development is being elaborated, and said that I should work with them; he suggested that I submit a major article to *Pod znamenem Marksizma*,<sup>174</sup> and that I put together a philosophical group (roughly thirty people) in order to discuss it. His basic idea is that through dialectics they have

arrived at the need to elaborate on historical problems—from the standpoint of the history of science and technology, and from the standpoint of intellectual development. To have historicism permeate everything, and so forth. I told him about our situation. I do not know whether that will lead to a withdrawal of his proposal. But he asserted, in word, at least, that the situation is intolerable, and so on. Perhaps we will find some support from that quarter. I have no other news to report. When I learn something, I will let you know. People are constantly interrogating me and pestering me. I think that things will work out for you in Kharkov and that a *modus vivendi*<sup>175</sup> will be found for you; beyond that nothing more is needed.

And now to business.

1. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to practice surgical skills.<sup>176</sup> Will we work together? If I could just combine this with gynecology or some other clinical study, I would come in December without fail. It is impossible to finish here: I am tired of the bureaucratic paperwork on account of the lost certificate. Vul'fovich<sup>177</sup> is inviting me to come, since the VD<sup>178</sup> is opening a child development clinic and they are offering me work as a consultant. To be able to combine a salary (work) with study, to complete two major clinical courses and three or four smaller ones (ear, eye, and dental)—that is what I really want. Whether I will be able to switch to Deriz<sup>179</sup> once and for all is not yet clear. Then I will quit. (2) In this regard, I very much like the public lectures that were arranged, for which I also thank you. As soon as I clarify the arrival date with Vul'fovich for certain, I will let you know the topics and days. (3) Finally, regarding the series. If they are going to publish it in a real sense and *periodically* (it has to be from issue to issue), *we need to take it in no uncertain terms*. I have: (1) a classification of aphasias; (2) Birenbaum and Vygotsky, aphasia and dementia; (3) Birenbaum and Zeigarnik, agnosia; (4) Vygotsky, written speech in brain disorders; (5) Vygotsky, grammatical disorders, and so on, and so forth, *ohne Zahl*,<sup>180</sup> as our patient says when asked how many fingers she has on her hands.

I will submit the first article by mid-December, and we will prepare three or four in reserve. Like Lewin's *Gestalttheorie*, and so on,<sup>181</sup> it is essential that there be an *overall title* for all of the studies.<sup>182</sup> The question of whether we should put out the series together or whether I should do it alone is not clear to me psychologically (from the standpoint of motives). What lies behind this. Make sure you explain this. Without waiting for

the explanations, I will say that for me the question itself is impossible and incomprehensible: how else could we do it if not together, and what motive could there be for doing otherwise? I shake your hand. Regards to our comrades. Sincerely, LV

*Series title (drafts):*

(1) psycholog. [crossed out]. Study of higher mental functions in development and decline.

(2) studies in clinical psychology.

(3) experimental and psychol. [the last word is crossed out] clinical study of psychopathology.

(4) study of thought and speech in pathological disorders.

(5) psychological studies of neurological diseases and mental illnesses.

(6) psychological clinical study of neurological diseases and mental illnesses.

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**To A.N. Leontiev**  
[May 10, 1934]<sup>183</sup>

. . . for the time being we are operating under the old [plan] and will officially begin our work on the third or fourth [?]. I think that ultimately we can either gain a lot or lose a lot from this undertaking. For now I would like to proceed in the direction you and I agreed upon, firmly adhering to our inner intentions to ensure complete linkage between our studies. How did the battles for the program go?<sup>184</sup> [Did you submit] the major points for the congress,<sup>185</sup> and when will it be held and what reports will be adopted?

I shake your hand. Greetings. Sincerely yours, LV

## Notes

1. Leonid Solomonovich Sakharov (1900–1928): a psychologist, associate, and close friend of Vygotsky. A study on the formation of artificial concepts that he wrote in the 1920s under Vygotsky's direction and the so-called Vygotsky-Sakharov methodology he devised are well known (see L.S. Vygotsky, *Myshlenie i rech'*, ch. 5).

2. At this time, during which Vygotsky was in the hospital with a flare-up of tuberculosis, with which he was diagnosed in 1919, he was writing the fundamental methodological work "Istoricheskii smysl psikhologicheskogo krizisa" [Historical Significance of the Psychological Crisis] (first published in 1982; see *Sobr. soch.* [Collected Works], vol. 1).

3. The Institute of Psychology in Moscow, where Vygotsky and Sakharov were working at the time.

4. Leonid Vladimirovich Zankov (1901–77): Russian psychologist, educator, and expert on physical and mental disabilities.

5. Ivan Mikhailovich Solov'ev (1902–86): Russian psychologist and expert on physical and mental disabilities.

6. *Practical Course on General Psychology* [Praktikum po obshchei psikhologii] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927); Vygotsky was one of its editors and authors.

7. "Elaborative": selective.

8. E. Titchener, *Uchebnik psikhologii* [Psychology Manual] (Moscow, 1914).

9. *Lapsus*: error (Latin).

10. L.S. Vygotskii [Vygotsky] et al., *Psikhologicheskaiia khrestomatiia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927).

11. "The experiments should be done on the simplest forms. . . ." An analogous task of assimilation, within the framework of the scientific experimental psychology, of a number of basic concepts and ideas in psychoanalysis appeared at this time in the works of K. Lewin (see his study *Vorsatz, Wille und Bedürfnis* [Berlin, 1926]; a Russian translation appears in the book K. Levin [Lewin], *Dinamicheskaiia psikhologiia* [Dynamic Psychology] (Moscow: Smysl, 2001).

12. Vygotsky's *Psikhologiia iskusstva* was first published in 1965.

13. The article "Problema dominantnykh reakttsii" [Problem of Dominant Reactions] was published in the collection *Problemy sovremennoi psikhologii* [Problems of Contemporary Psychology] (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 100–123.

14. This letter was written from a sanatorium in which Vygotsky was staying in connection with another exacerbation of his tuberculosis.

15. A.R. Luria's article, "Die moderne russische Physiologie und die Psychoanalyse" (*Int. Zsch. f. Psychoanalyse*, 1926, vol. 12). Regarding Vygotsky's attitude toward attempts to join the studies of Pavlov and Freud, see the work "Istoricheskii smysl psikhologicheskogo krizisa" [Historical Significance of the Psychological Crisis] (hereinafter, "Crisis"), section 7 (*Sobr. soch.*, vol. 1, pp. 326–40).

16. "profound provincialism": Similar pointed assessments of Russian psychology in the early part of the century are contained in "Crisis" (*Sobr. soch.*, vol. 1, p. 370 and elsewhere).

17. Georgii Ivanovich Chelpanov (1862–36): Russian psychologist and founder and director (from 1912 to 1923) of the Institute of Psychology in Moscow.

18. Iu.B. Frankfurt: Russian psychoneurologist and educator. In "Crisis," Vygotsky repeatedly criticizes his article [In Defense of a Revolutionary Marxist View of the Mind]. The article begins: "Scientific thought is blossoming on the material foundation of the growing and expanding economic and political might of the proletariat of the USSR, a fact acknowledged by both our friends and our enemies," and so on (*Problemy sovremennoi psikhologii*, Leningrad, 1926, p. 202).

19. Report on the Psychology of Deaf Mutes in English: "The Principles of Social Education of the Deaf" ([presented at] Int. Conf. of the Educ. of the Deaf, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 227–37). In 1925, Vygotsky was sent to London to attend an international conference on teaching deaf mutes, where he delivered a report. The journey was his only trip abroad.

20. Charles Scott Sherrington (1859–1952): a leading British physiologist.



21. E.W. Scripture: American psychologist known for his studies on the psychology and psychopathology of speech.

22. “Cramped Moscow room”: After moving from Gomel to Moscow, Vygotsky lived for a time in a basement room at the Institute of Psychology allotted him by the administration. He later lived with his family and parents in an apartment at 17 B. Serpukhovka, where Vygotsky and his wife and children owned one room.

23. Pneumothorax was a method of treating tuberculosis that involved the repeated introduction of neutral gases or air into the pleural cavity in order to compress the lung. Vygotsky began undergoing treatments “on the pneumothorax” in the early 1920s.

24. “Fate of the cause”: this letter was written at least a year before the very first, direct, and positive formulations of the ideas of the cultural-historical theory found in archival materials (see “Iz zapisnykh knizhek Vygotskogo,” *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*, Series 14, Psychology, 1977, no. 2, pp. 89–95). As this part of the letter makes clear, even then, Vygotsky regarded his work in psychology as a “cause”—as a sociotechnical and cultural-technical action to radically restructure psychology in light of the methodological program he had outlined in “Crisis” (compare this with his letters to Leontiev of April 15, 1929; July 2, 1929; July 23, 1929; and August 2, 1933).

25. Konstantin Nikolaevich Kornilov (1879–1957): Russian psychologist and educator and initiator of a reorganization of the system of psychological knowledge based on Marxist methodology. At the time, he was director of the Institute of Psychology.

26. A veiled paraphrase of the sign over the gates of hell: “Abandon hope, all ye who enter here,” from Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

27. The reference is to the characteristic behavior of a hen when confronted with an insoluble task as described by K. Buehler.

28. Sultan: the name of one of the monkeys in the classic experiments by V.W. Kohler.

29. “For you”: apparently, for Luria and Leontiev.

30. Jungian: a reference to the classic studies by C.G. Jung on associative methodology.

31. “Letters from the GUS”: the GUS was the State Research Council of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic People’s Commissariat of Education (PCE). Vygotsky was a member of the council.

32. Aron Borisovich Zalkind (1888–1936): Russian psychoneurologist, educator, and child expert whose views (so-called psychoneurology, or, more accurately, vulgar socialist pedagogy) were an eclectic blend of behaviorism, reflexology, Freudianism, and Marxism.

33. Nothing is known about the work of Vygotsky himself or his closest associates on the problem of the blind and deaf. However, Vygotsky always attached fundamental importance to the psychology and education of the blind and deaf, showing a special interest in the innovative studies of I.A. Sokolianskii. Specific programs for studies on the problem of the blind and deaf mutes proposed by Vygotsky within the framework of the State Research Council’s pedagogical council for blind, deaf, mute, and mentally challenged children and others are also known (see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 5, pp. 43 and 45–48, and also his article “Vospitanie slepoglukhonemykh detei” [Education of Blind and Deafmute Children], in *Psikhologicheskiiia entsikopediia* (Moscow, 1928), vol. 2, pp. 395–96.

34. “World congress of psychologists”: the Eighth International Psychological Congress on Experimental Psychology in Groningen, 1926.

35. Vera Nikolaevna Blagovidova: actress at the Moscow Chamber Theater and A.R. Luria’s first wife.

36. Lengiz: the Leningrad State Publishing House. The reference may be to the collection *Problemy sovremennoi psikhologii* [Problems of Modern Psychology] (Leningrad, 1926), which included three articles by Vygotsky.

37. Gita L’vovna Vygodskaiia testifies that A.R. Luria did not drink wine. At friendly gatherings, he was given a glass of milk, and this became a subject of constant joking. In his note to the word “wine,” Vygotsky recalls a work by K. Groos, perhaps his “Enkapsis. Ein Beitrag zur Strukturphilosophie” (*Zsch. f. Psychol.*, 1926, vol. 98, pp. 273–303; cf. “Iz zapisnykh knizhek L.S. Vygotskogo.”

38. Phrenicotomy: a surgical means of treating tuberculosis.

39. GIZ: State Publishing House.

40. “On ‘monkey’”: the reference is to the original version of a study on the phylogenesis of human forms of behavior, later transformed into the book, co-authored with Luria, *Etudy po istorii povedeniia* [Studies in the History of Behavior] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1930).

41. “Superhuman”: Vygotsky (following Nietzsche’s lead) saw the idea of the “superhuman” as linked with the possibility of a person’s overcoming any of his present natural and quasi-natural determinants, the possibility of “self-transcendence” toward the potential human being, a new and “future” human being who would at the same time be the fullest realization of his “essence,” a “human being within a human being” (Dostoevsky), or of the “‘pinnacle’ in man,” as Vygotsky himself put it. This understanding of man as a being who is never formed conclusively and remains “open,” as a being whose inner growth is the very means of his existence, was always at the core of Vygotsky’s thinking, beginning with his earliest studies—“Gamlet” [Hamlet], “Psikhologii iskusstva” [Psychology of Art], and “Isotircheskii smysl psikhologicheskogo krizisa” [Historical Significance of the Psychological Crisis]. The entire theory of “mastering” the mind by means of signs, which is at the heart of cultural-historical psychology, was developed by Vygotsky within this “anthropological” framework.

42. *Praktikum po eksperimental’noi psikhologii* [Practical Course in Experimental Psychology] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927). Vygotsky was one of its compilers and authors.

43. “The Kingdom of Heaven is within us (within the laboratory)”: This part of the letter, as well as a number of places in letters to Leontiev that appear later, leave no doubt that Vygotsky had an awareness of a “calling” and a belief in the historical and, at the same time, profoundly personal significance and pathos of his “cause.”

44. As much as you need (Latin).

45. [Missing in the original.]

46. Greta Isaakovna Sakharova was the widow of L.S. Sakharov, a young scientist who committed suicide.

47. Vera Izrailevna; no last name could be determined.

48. The commission investigating the circumstances of L.S. Sakharov’s death.

49. To Five-Faced Kuz’ma (i.e., Koz’me) Prutkov. The letter was written in reply to a joke message and booklet of verse on the occasion of Vygotsky’s departure for Tashkent (to deliver lectures) from the so-called five—a group of his closest stu-

dents consisting of: Lidiia Il'ichna Bozhovich (1908–81), Roza Evgen'evna Levina (1909–89), Nataliia Grigor'evna Morozova (1906–89), Liia Solomonovna Slavina (1906–86), and Alexander Vladimirovich Zaporozhets (1905–81) [this group is commonly referred to as the *piaterka*—Ed.]. A copy of the booklet survives in the archive of N.G. Morozova. It can now be read (see G.L. Vygotskaia and T.M. Lifanova, *Lev semenovich Vygotskii. Zhizn'. Deiatel' nost'. Shtrikhi k portretu* [Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Life. Career. Brushstrokes on a Portrait] [Moscow: Smysl, 1996], pp. 195–97). That same book reproduces two photographs of Vygotsky conducting a class with students at the Central Asian State University (CASU) in Tashkent in April 1929.

50. A.V. Zaporozhets was the only male member of the “five.”

51. “Forest” (in Russian, “les,” from Vygotsky’s first two initials, L.S.): a private, “esoteric” nickname for Vygotsky used by his closest students and the topic of one of the poems in the booklet.

52. Birnam Forest and Dunsinane Castle: see Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V.

53. Erich Jaensch (1883–1940): German psychologist known for his work on the problem of eidetism (see L.S. Vygotsky, “Eiditika,” in *Osnovnye techeniia sovremennoi psikhologii* [Moscow and Leningrad, 1930], pp. 84–125). Vygotsky may perhaps have had in mind Jaensch’s work, “Die Natur der menschlichen Sprachlaute,” *Zsch. f. Psychologie*, 1913, vol. 47, pp. 219–90.

54. A solution to this continuously contemplated issue was given by Vygotsky in the report “O psikhologicheskikh sistemakh” [On Psychological Systems], which he presented in October 1930 at the Clinic for Neurological Diseases (published only in 1982; see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 1). In the report, Vygotsky links the ideas of a systemic structure of higher mental functions and a social genesis of these functions and poses the task of studying functional systems and their outcomes.

55. G.V. Murashev: Russian psychologist and expert on physical and mental disabilities, who speculated that “the childhood of a mentally disabled child is abbreviated, not prolonged, in comparison with the childhood of a normal child” (for a reference to this, see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 5, pp. 328–29).

56. Illiinskii-Savenko: This individual could not be identified (Compiler’s note). This may be a reference to two people whose last names are joined together in accordance with widespread practice (for example, the “Vygotsky-Sakharov method”). If so, it might be assumed that first name refers to Iu.F. Ellinskii, who in late 1928 replaced L.S. Vygotsky as head of the medical-pedagogical station (consultation office) of the RSFSR People’s Commissariat of Education (Editor’s note).

57. SPON: the Department for the Social and Legal Protection of Minors of the RSFSR People’s Commissariat of Education. In 1924, Vygotsky became head of the department’s disability section. The department’s child development office was headed by I.A. Ariamov.

58. Vsevolod Petrovich Kashchenko (1870–1943): Russian expert on physical and mental disabilities, who served through the end of 1927 as director of the medical-pedagogical station (see above), which was reconstituted in 1929 as the Commissariat’s Institute of Experimental Physical and Mental Disabilities, of which I.I. Daniushevskii was named director. Today it is the Russian Academy of Education’s Research Institute of Correctional Education.

59. “‘Conference’ on the instrumental method”: one of the so-called internal conferences that were regularly held by Vygotsky’s group.

60. "Study of Korsakov's psychosis": no articles by A.N. Leontiev on this topic are known.

61. Margarita Petrovna Leontieva: A.N. Leontiev's wife.

62. This and Vygotsky's next letter were given to the Luria family archive in 1936 by V.N. Blagovidova and are published with her permission.

63. AKV: the N.K. Krupskaja Academy of Communist Education; MGU no. 2: Moscow State University no. 2 (later reconstituted as the V.I. Lenin Moscow State Pedagogical Institute, now renamed the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute).

64. The letter is dated on the basis of the Moscow postmark.

65. The letter is dated 1929 based on the mention of Vygotsky's trip to Tashkent and the report of Luria's invitation to the Ninth International Congress of Psychology in September 1929 (Harvard, United States). Luria's archive preserves the congress program, a map of Harvard with notations, and the text of a joint report with Vygotsky on the fate of egocentric speech.

66. A.I. Rudnik: physiologist. In the late 1920s she was a member of a group of associates in the section for the study of cultural behavior (under Luria's direction).

67. Supreme law (Latin).

68. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939): French philosopher, sociologist, and ethnographer known for his studies on primitive thinking. The reference may be to his work *La mentalité primitive* (Paris, 1922).

69. "S[ecund] part of 'monkey'": The reference is to the manuscript of Vygotsky's joint study with Luria *Etiudy po istorii povedeniia (Obez'iana. Primitiv. Rebenok.)* [Studies of the History of Behavior (Ape. Primitive Man. Child)] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1930).

70. "First chapter": the foreword to *Etiudy* states that chapters 1 and 2 were written by Vygotsky and chapter 3 by Luria. It can only be assumed that the original order of the parts of the book was different.

71. V.F. Schmidt: wife of the famous polar explorer O. Schmidt and a psychologist and expert on physical and mental disabilities who espoused a psychoanalytical orientation in the 1920s. For a critical look at studies by Russian researchers having a psychoanalytical orientation (who also included Luria in the early 1920s), see Vygotsky's work "Isotircheskii smysl psikhologicheskogo krizisa" (*Sobr. soch.*, vol. 1), as well as an earlier work by M.M. Bakhtin, published under the pseudonym V.N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism* (Moscow, 1927).

72. Melanie Klein: American psychoanalyst.

73. Jean Piaget (1896–1980): Swiss psychologist and founder of the Geneva school of genetic psychology.

74. "If you cannot complete it": The reference is to the manuscript of Leontiev's book *Razvitie pamiati* [Development of Memory] (Moscow, 1931). According to A.N. Leontiev himself, the manuscript was completed and forwarded to the publishing house in July 1930 (see Leontiev's letter to N.G. Morozova of August 29, 1930, reproduced in her reminiscences of Leontiev in the book *A.N. Leont'ev i sovremennaiia psikhologiya* [A.N. Leontiev and Contemporary Psychology] [Moscow, 1983], p. 239).

75. Alfred Binet (1837–1911): French psychologist and specialist in the field of psychometry and testology. Which one of Binet's books is referred to here is unclear. It may be *Psychologie des grands calculateurs et joueurs d'échecs* (Paris, 1894).

76. "School-age child development": a reference to Vygotsky's study *Pedologiya shkol'nogo vozrasta* [School Age Pedology] (Moscow, 1928).

77. Aleksandra Alekseevna and Nikolai Vladimirovich Leontiev: A.N. Leontiev's parents.

78. [Missing in the original.]

79. Here I stand (German).

80. Chakva: a village near Batumi.

81. "Your manuscript": The reference is to A.N. Leontiev's book *Razvitie pamiati*.

82. A. Shein [name transliterated from Russian]: a psychoneurologist.

83. Pavel Maksimovich Iakobson (1902–79): Russian psychologist and author of the book *Razvitie stsenicheskikh chuvstv aktera* [Development of the Actor's Stage Feelings] (Moscow, 1936), to which Vygotsky wrote the preface (*Sobr. soch.*, vol. 6, pp. 319–23).

84. "Dream": on account of his tuberculosis, Vygotsky could not live on the Black Sea coast in the Caucasus.

85. "Our idea": the idea of the cultural-historical nature of man's higher psychological functions.

86. Understanding psychology (German).

87. The reference is to the so-called public discussion of cultural-historical theory organized in the early 1930s.

88. "Zalkind's discussion": The so-called reactological discussion held in 1931 (see *Psikhologiya*, 1931, vol. 4, no. 1). Vygotsky spoke during the discussion (see *Materialy reaktologicheskoi diskussii*, 1931, Transcripts. Archive of the Russian Academy of Education's Psychology Institute, collection 82, catalogue 1, storage unit 11, pp. 5–15).

89. The first All-Union Congress on Psychological Testing and the Psychophysiology of Labor, held in Leningrad on May 20–25, 1931.

90. Here, omens (from the Latin—divining from the flight and chirping of birds).

91. The reference may be to A.R. Luria's open "penitential" letter, preserved in the Luria family archive, to the editorial board of *Estestvoznaniie i Marksizm* in response to charges by the journal's editorial board that Luria's article "Puti sovremennoi psikhologii" [Directions of Contemporary Psychology], published in nos. 2–3 of that same journal for 1930, was an "apology for bourgeois psychology."

92. Navinskii: This person could not be identified.

93. Kal'man: This person could not be identified (compiler's note). The reference could be to the E. Kol'man mentioned on p. 105 of N.S. Kurek's book *Istoriia likvidatsii pedologii i psikhotehniki* [History of the Liquidation of Pedology and Psychological Testing] (St. Petersburg, 2004) as a "guardian of ideological purity" and author of the articles "O polozhenii na fronte estestvoznaniia" [On the Situation on the Natural Science Front] (1932) and "Chernosotennyi bred fashizma i nasha medico-biologicheskaiia nauka" [The Black-Hundred Delirium of Fascism and Our Medical-Biological Science] (1936). Among other things, he criticized the director of the Institute of Medical Genetics, S.G. Levit (who was repressed in 1936) for conducting allegedly fascist research (note by T.V. Akhutina).

94. "Report": at the congress, Vygotsky delivered a report entitled "Prakticheskaia deiatel'nost' i myshlenie v razvitiu rebenka v sviazi s problemoi politekhizma" [Practical Activity and Thinking in Child Development in Connection with the Problem of Polytechnism]. The main points of the report survive in the scientist's archives (see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 6, p. 373, List of Works by L.S. Vygotsky, item 126).

95. D. Kazanin (Kasanin): American psychologist and one of the authors of a well-known modification of the Vygotsky-Sakharov methodology for the formation of artificial concepts (see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 6, p. 390, List of works about L.S. Vygotsky). [Vol. 6, p. 390, in Russian, lists E. Hanfmann and J. Kasanin (not D. Kasanin). "A Method for the Study of Concept Formation," *Journal of Psychology*, 1937, no. 3, pp. 521–40. These authors are not listed in the English, *Collected Works*, vol. 6.—Ed.]

96. This reference may be to Vygotsky's article "Thought in Schizophrenia," *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, 1924, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 1063–79.

97. Possibly K.N. Kornilov, *Uchebnik psikhologii* [Psychology Manual] (Moscow, 1932).

98. The Neurological Diseases Clinic under the direction of E.K. Sepp.

99. Gita Vasil'evna Birnbaum (Birenbaum) (1903–52): Russian psychologist. In 1923–25 and 1927–30, she studied at the University of Berlin, where under the direction of K. Lewin she completed a well-known study on the forgetting of intentions. After moving to Moscow, she worked for a time at the psychiatric clinic directed by Vygotsky.

100. Leon Lazarevich Rokhlin (1903–85): Russian psychiatrist and founder and president (1930–39) of the All-Ukraine Psychoneurological Academy (in Kharkov). It was once assumed that Vygotsky would be the academy's research director.

101. BSE: *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. The reference is apparently to the publishing house, not the first edition of the encyclopedia. Vygotsky wrote a number of articles for the *Pedagogical Encyclopedia* and for the *Great Medical Encyclopedia*, but no articles having these titles could be found among Vygotsky's works.

102. T.L. Kogan: member of the editorial board of the journal *Psikhologiya*, which was published in 1928–32. Luria became a member of the journal's editorial board in 1931.

103. A.A. Talankin: psychologist and a member of the party cell at the Institute of Psychology in Moscow and one of the active organizers of and participants in (along with F.N. Shemiakin, T.L. Kogan, A.V. Vedenov, and others) the so-called reactological discussion of 1931.

104. Such charges against cultural-historical theory were a common feature of a number of "critical" works published in the early 1930s, beginning with *Rezoliutsiia . . .* [Resolution . . .], based on the outcome of the reactological discussion (see *Psikhologiya*, 1931, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 3).

105. "Destroyed": This reference is to the breakup of the group of Vygotsky's closest students, the "Five," the individual members of which, after graduating from the university, were dispatched to jobs in various cities. They did, however, assemble on a regular basis for so-called internal conferences, carrying on their work, to a certain extent, under an integrated research program (see the reminiscences of R.E. Levina and N.G. Morozova in the journal *Defektologiya*, 1984, no. 5).

106. The so-called internal conferences (see note 105).

107. NKS: This could mean the NKP (the People's Commissariat of Education), the NKZ (the People's Commissariat of Public Health), or even the NKPS (the People's Commissariat of Railroads).

108. SD: This abbreviation could not be deciphered. (Compiler's note.) This may be a reference to Vygotsky's work as a member of the bureau of the school section of the (district) Soviet of Worker, Peasant, and Red Army Deputies, which required



a great deal of his energy. [For more on Vygotsky's activity in this regard, see Vygotskaia and Lifanova, *Lev Semenovich Vygotskii* (1996), p. 231.—Ed.]

109. The reference could be to the second part of Vygotsky's study *Pedologiia podrostka* [Adolescent Development] published in 1931.

110. VARNITSO: The All-Russia Association of Workers in Science, the Arts, and Technology for the Promotion of Socialist Construction.

111. This letter, like the preceding one, was sent to Samarkand at the time Luria was taking part in a Central Asian survey.

112. The reference is to a recreation of the classical tests conducted by Rorschach, Kohs, and Rupp (see S. Ia. Rubinshtein, *Eksperimental'nye metodiki patopsikologii* [Moscow, 1970]).

113. Bliuma Vul'fovna Zeigarnik (1900–1988): Russian psychologist who worked in the 1920s under the direction of K. Lewin in Berlin, where she completed a well-known study on the memory of completed and incomplete actions (see *Khrestomatiiia po obshchei psikhologii: psikhologiia pamiati*, ed. Iu.B. Gippenreiter and V.Ia. Romanov, 2d ed. [Moscow, 1979]).

114. F. Hoppe: German psychologist and student of K. Lewin known for his classic study of the level of aspirations (1931).

115. *Sättigung*: satiation (German).

116. *Spannung*: tension (German).

117. *Ersatz*: substitution (German).

118. Kurt Lewin (1890–1947): German psychologist affiliated with gestalt psychology, one of the major figures of twentieth century psychology (a whole series of fields of modern experimental psychology arose under his determining influence) and creator of the so-called topological (dynamic) psychology of the individual and group. He met with Vygotsky during a visit to Moscow in 1931. Vygotsky and Lewin regarded each other with great interest and respect. Lewin's reaction to Vygotsky's death is known (it is described in the reminiscences of R.E. Levina and N.G. Morozova—see *Defektologiia*, 1984, no. 5); regarding Vygotsky's view of K. Lewin's theory, see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 5, pp. 231–56.

119. Isai Davidovich Sapir (1897–1937): Russian psychiatrist and psychoneurologist.

120. Kazmina: This person could not be identified.

121. "Discussions of our reports": the reference is the so-called public discussion of cultural-historical theory that began in the early 1930s.

122. "About the symptoms": see the preceding letter to Luria.

123. "Since the breakup": see the note to the preceding letter.

124. A reference to K. Lewin's classic methodological work: "Der Übergang von der aristotelischen zur galileischen Denkweise in Biologie und Psychologie," *Erkenntnis*, 1931, vol. 1; for a Russian translation, see K. Lewin, "Perekhod ot aristotelevskogo k galileevskomu sposobu myshleniia v biologii i psikhologii," in *Dinamicheskaia Psikhologiia* (Moscow: Smysl, 2001), pp. 54–84.

125. See L.S. Vygotsky, *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 5, pp. 231–56; A.A. Puzyrei, *Kul'turno-istoricheskaia teoriia Vygotskogo i sovremennaia psikhologiia* (Moscow, 1986).

126. TseKUBU: The Central Commission on Improving Living Conditions for Scientists.

127. "Honorarium for Charlotta Bühler": A translation of a book by S. Bühler et al., *Sotsial'no-psikhologicheskoe izuchenie rebenka pervogo goda zhizni* [Social-

Psychological Study of the Child in the First Year of Life], was published under the joint editorship of Vygotsky and Luria (Moscow and Leningrad, 1931).

128. This may be a reference to a study by Vygotsky titled “Orudie i znak v psikhicheskom razvitii rebenka” [Tool and Sign in the Mental Development of the Child] (see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 6), which was supposed to be published in a child psychology manual edited by K. Merchison. The study was never published in America.

129. Gasilov: This person could not be identified.

130. Eiten Bleuler (1859–1939): Swiss psychiatrist.

131. Efim Aronovich Arkin (1873–1948): Russian physician and psychologist. In 1924 he organized and headed the country’s first department of preschool education at MGU no. 2.

132. See note 91.

133. Z. Geimanovich: psychiatrist at whose apartment in Kharkov the members of the Kharkov group once stayed (A.N. Leontiev, L.I. Bozhovich, and others).

134. *Zucker*: Here, flattering, sugary.

135. “To the People’s Commissariat”: The Ukrainian People’s Commissariat of Education.

136. “Sancho-like”: A reference to the character Sancho Panza in the Cervantes novel *Don Quixote*.

137. See the preceding letter.

138. *Ibid.*

139. *Ibid.*

140. Institutional work assignments—a system of government work assignments given to younger specialists. Higher school and technical college graduates were required to work in such assigned jobs for three years.

141. Report no. 2 was one of A.R. Luria’s letters/reports on the progress of the Central Asian survey.

142. “Experiments with colors”: See A.R. Luria, *Ob istoricheskoi razvitii poznatel’nykh protsessov* [On the Historical Development of Cognitive Processes] (Moscow, 1974), pp. 37–44.

143. *Farbennamenamnesie*: amnesia with regard to the names of colors (German).

144. The survey referred to here could not be established.

145. The study by the German psychologist Vladimir Eliasberg that Vygotsky had in mind here could not be ascertained. Perhaps it was *Über die autonome Kindersprache* (Berlin, 1923).

146. “Stern’s four stages”: See *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 2, pp. 80–89; vol. 4, pp. 115–16.

147. [*In aller Ewigkeit*]: eternal (German).

148. All of this can be possible with the child himself (German).

149. “Preface to Piaget”: see Zh. Piazhe [J. Piaget], *Rech’ i myshlenie rebenka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1932), pp. 3–54.

150. *Autonome Kindersprache*: autonomous children’s speech (German).

151. “Stumpf’s son”: Regarding the case described, see K. Stumpf, “Eigenartige sprachliche Entwicklung eines Kindes,” *Ztsr. f. Pädagogische, Psyche und Pathologie*, 1901, vol. 3, no. 6.

152. “The Gelb and Goldstein case”: see A. Gelb and K. Goldstein, “Über Farbenamnesie,” *Psychol. Forsch.*, 1925, vol. 6, pp. 127–86.

153. What visual impairment of his own Vygotsky was referring to could not be ascertained in greater detail.



154. Gestalt theory (German).
155. From the Greek *emphasis*—intensity of expression, emphasis.
156. Respectively (Latin).
157. Tenerife: an island in the Canary Island group in the Atlantic Ocean, off the northwestern coast of Africa, where the German psychologist W. Köhler conducted his classic studies of the intellect of anthropoid monkeys (see his book *Issledovanie intellekta chelovekoobraznykh obez'ian*, ed. L.S. Vygotsky [Moscow, 1930]).
158. K. Lewin traveled to Moscow in November 1931 and met with Vygotsky.
159. “the director of the institute”: The N.I. Propper-Grashchenko All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine (see note 166).
160. K. Koffka (1867–1941): German psychologist and one of the major proponents of Gestalt psychology. He took part in the survey expedition to Central Asia.
161. F.N. Shemiakin: psychologist and survey participant.
162. E.N. Mardkovich: psychologist and participant (?) in the Central Asian survey (see A.R. Luria, *Istoricheskoe razvitie poznatel'nykh protsessov* [Moscow, 1974], pp. 4, 37, and others).
163. “Report on schizophrenia”: See *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 6, List of Works by L.S. Vygotsky, item 133, p. 373.
164. Status quo: the existing situation (Latin).
165. “Commission”: What this refers to could not be established.
166. N.I. Propper-Grashchenkov: director of the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine; in 1934, he offered Vygotsky a position as a department head.
167. SOTsEKGIZ : The State Socioeconomic Literature Publishing House.
168. “With AVrch”: Perhaps with A.V. Zaporozhets. The experiments being referred to could not be ascertained.
169. A.V. Zaporozhets and his wife Tamara Osipovna (Iosifovna) Ginevskaia.
170. “‘Exile’ to Kharkov”: Luria’s taking a position in Kharkov, where he first supervised the department of pediatric and genetic psychology and later the psychology section at the Ukrainian Psychoneurological Institute, which was reconstituted in 1932 as the All-Ukraine Psychoneurological Academy, and also headed the psychology department at the Kharkov Pedagogical Institute. In point of fact, however, Leontiev never actually moved to Kharkov. He merely traveled to Kharkov on a regular basis (through 1934), delivering lectures and supervising research work (see A.A. Leontiev, “Tvorcheskii put' Alekseia Nikolaevicha Leont'eva,” in *A.N. Leont'ev i sovremennaia psikhologiya* [Moscow, 1983], pp. 11–16).
171. “Everything that happened with A.R. [Luria]”: Luria first joined the Kharkov group and even headed the aforementioned psychology section. Later, however, after some hesitation, he quit as section head and left the Kharkov group.
172. *Propria manu*—with my own hands (Latin).
173. M.B. Mishin: philosopher.
174. *Pod znamenem Marksizma*—a philosophy journal. The article referred to could not be identified.
175. Manner of living (Latin).
176. “Practice surgical skills”: Vygotsky, like Luria, sought to acquire medical training. He enrolled in the Kharkov Psychoneurological Institute’s department of medicine in 1931 and was able to complete three years of study.
177. Vul'fovich: This individual could not be identified.
178. VD: The meaning of this abbreviation could not be ascertained.

179. Deriz: The meaning of this word could not be established.

180. A countless number (German).

181. "As with . . . Lewin": A reference to a renowned series of studies by K. Lewin's students, published in the 1930s in the Gestalt journal *Psychologische Forschung*, under the overall title *Issledovaniia po psikhologii voli i affekta* (more than fifteen articles were published, a large portion of which subsequently became classics in psychology).

182. A program of neuropsychological research.

183. This letter is damaged in many places; it is dated from the postmark.

184. "Battles for the program": Apparently a reference to the program of studies of the "Kharkov group."

185. "Major points for the congress" The major points of a report that were presented to the First Ukrainian Congress of Psychoneurology in 1934, "Psikhologiia i uchenie o lokalizatsii psikhicheskikh funktsii" (see *Sobr. soch.*, vol. 1, pp. 166–74).