

Copy of a letter written in Lviv on August 12, 1968 and given privately to an American tourist to bring to Canada. The following excerpt deals with prices:

"Here is what things cost here: bread - 17-30 kopecks per loaf; meat - 2.50 rubles per kilogram; butter - 3.50 rubles per kg.; flour - 41 kopecks per kg.; potatoes - 25 kopecks per kg.; eggs - 1.50 - 2.50 for 10 eggs; sugar - 89 kopecks per kg.; milk - 24 kopecks per liter. One pair of closed women's shoes - 35 - 40 rubles; men's shoes - 40 - 50 rubles per pair; a winter coat - 250 - 300 rubles; a fall coat - 120 - 150 rubles; a raincoat - 70 rubles; underwear (set) - 25 rubles; silk stockings - 2.50 - 3 rubles per pair; woolen stockings - 4 - 10 rubles per pair; a kerchief (the kind received in letter packages) - 35 rubles; a sweater - 40 - 70 rubles. Don't even ask about luxuries such as washing machines, etc., because only the higher race has access to these.

We are extremely fed up with everything. It is true that there are plenty of jobs here. Anyone who wants to work, can find a job, but what does he get out of it? What one earns in a month is hardly enough to pay for some sort of passable food, but if one needs to buy a piece of underwear, one has to give up some food. Army personnel, high officials and Party members earn high salaries. But we ordinary people earn between 60 and 80 rubles per month. For the 60 rubles that I earn in a month, I can buy not quite a whole pair of boots (a pair costs 70 rubles) or two meters of woolen cloth for a coat.

From AEGASSOWARY/29
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