

Ilya Ilf / Evgeni Petrov

title

Odnoetazhnaya Amerika
One-Storeyed Amerika

Travel journal. Tekst Publishers. Moscow 2005. 404 pages

Sold to: Germany, Latvia, Romania, Spain, USA

Sent by Stalin to the land of Coca Cola, today the laid-back, tongue-in-cheek angle on the prevailing ideologies and mitigating perspective on the United States of America from the reporters Ilf and Petrov comes across as being astonishingly contemporary. Post-communist Russia has now been subjected to a decade of ostensible Americanisation while America's leadership role as a democratic and economic power has become a precarious one. This classic work of travel reporting shows how much and yet how little has changed since then. It also highlights the similarities and differences between the two large, conflicting cultures of Russia and America.

In 1935 the well known Russian satirists Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov were sent to America as Special Correspondents for the newspaper PRAVDA, driving right across the country and back. Their two month exploration of America following the Great Depression is captured in the humorous text and with Ilf's Leica camera. However, their alternative perspectives and biting commentaries were not in complete compliance with the expectations of the socialist propagandists and only specific excerpts of their reportage appeared in PRAVDA. The photographs were published with commentaries in the magazine OGONYEK. The Russian edition of the book was, of course, also subject to censorship. In 1946 translations into English, French and Spanish appeared abroad which, as with some later editions, were all based on the censored Soviet version.

This forgotten classic is now finally available in its entirety, uncensored, edited by Aleksandra Ilf, Ilya's daughter and supplemented by Ilf's photographs and the personal letters which Ilf and Petrov sent to their wives from America, as well as reader's comments dating back to 1937. The majority of the letters and photographs are published here for the first time.



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The Golden Calf
The 12 Chairs

biography

Ilya Ilf (1897-1937) and Evgeni Petrov (1903-1942) are a well known writer duo from the former Soviet Union. They are still considered today to be the most famous Russian satirists. They wrote most of their works together and were generally known as "Ilf and Petrov". Their work belongs to the classics of the 20th century and they achieved international acclaim with both the novel THE GOLDEN CALF and THE TWELVE CHAIRS. The latter was filmed by Mel Brooks.

I. Ilf / E. Petrov