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- *From:* Pat Flannery <flanner@xxxxxxxxxx>
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Wallace Berry wrote:

I worked in Moscow for a month in 1989 as part of a group with experiments on a Biocosmos flight (mentioned so that this post is not too off topic). Your quote is one of the best and most succinct ways of describing my impression of life in and around Moscow at that time.

What hit me most was the degree of corruption; the black market was everywhere, and getting anything at all done relied on bribery of some sort.*

I kept thinking to myself that if it weren't for the fact that this place imprisons and kills people at the drop of a hat, this would all be some sort of a hilarious surrealistic comedy.

The average Russian seemed like a very nice person though; you got the impression that they were cursed to live in a perpetually dysfunctional and corrupt political system, and that anything they did that was wrong was in most cases a result of desperation in an attempt to survive rather than a desire to profit by doing wrong.

* Although when you think about it, that's what made the fall of the Soviet Union survivable for the populace. They weren't relying on the government for their survival, but rather on the black market. So when the government fell, all they needed to do was to fall back on the black market to a greater degree to get the necessities of life.

Pat .