

Veteran Writer Tells Opinion On Moscow's 'Change of Heart'

Editor's note: How genuine is the "new look" in Russia? Does it extend right down to the Soviet people? In an outstanding position to judge is Henry Shapiro, United Press correspondent in Moscow from 1937 to 1951. Shapiro has just returned to Moscow after a two-year stay in the United States.

The U. P. assigned Shapiro, as his first task, to give his verdict on whether Russia has really undergone a change of heart.

In question and answer form, here is his report.

By HENRY SHAPIRO
United Press Correspondent
Moscow—U.P.—Q. What is the single most striking change you have noticed since your return?

A. The moment I crossed the Finnish-Soviet border west of Leningrad, I was struck by the extraordinary courtesy and friendliness not only of officials but of private citizens. They no longer avoid foreigners but instead were eager to chat with me. And the first newspaper I read was refreshing. From the press have disappeared the phrases like "warmongering Americans, cannibals, hyenas."

Q. When you talk with a Russian man-in-the-street these days, what is the first question he asks?

A. He asks: "Does America really want war with the Soviet Union?" I believe, in his own

mind, he now has become pretty well assured that the answer is "no." Then he inquires about American politics, living standards and foreign policy.

Q. Suppose you should ask him: "Is the world predestined to become Communist?"

A. He would say "yes" and he would believe it thoroughly. The younger generation of Russians has grown up indoctrinated since 1917 to believe world communism is inevitable.

Q. Have Moscow prices and supplies changed since you were there last?

A. Prices of food and clothing have changed hardly at all in the last two years. But the stores do appear better stocked and there are fewer shortages. People in the streets appear better clothed.

Q. Has censorship for American reporters eased?

A. Though formal censorship continues, foreign correspondents are now able to report more freely than at any time since the war.

Q. Has travel become more relaxed for foreigners?

A. Yes. Formerly barred areas such as Siberia, Central Asia, the Volga regions and the Caucasus now are accessible al-

though many other areas are still out of bounds.

Q. Will the average Russian discuss who is top man in his country?

A. Yes, he will discuss it. But the average unsophisticated Rus-

slan, a taxi driver or housewife, will say there is no top man. Vozhd—the Russian word for leader—has not been used since Stalin's death.

Q. From your own personal observations and conversations, who would you say is the No. 1 Russian now?

Q. Under the Soviet system of Communist Party monopoly, Khrushchev as first secretary is unquestionably No. 1 of the 11 members of the Presidium who make basic policy. So far as over-all authority and prestige go, Khrushchev has a slight

edge on Bulganin. But power is apparently shared with other members of the Presidium including Molotov and Malenkov. I have heard no one call Khrushchev "khozyain" or "boss" as Stalin was frequently designated.

Q. Are there evident civil defense preparations?

A. Nothing in the way of air raid tests or public shelters. Occasionally newspapers publish guarded descriptions of the potentialities of the H-bomb but there is no specific speculation, such as in American newspapers,

about what it would do to a certain city.

Q. Do the Russian people themselves seem to reflect a softening of their personal behavior?

A. Unquestionably. They smile, laugh and talk more freely among themselves and with foreigners. They exchange political anecdotes and write increasing numbers of critical letters to the newspapers.

Q. Is there any change in women's fashions or appearance?

A. Yes, women are becoming

increasingly more style conscious and newspaper editorials encourage them.

Q. Should you go to a Russian Orthodox church on a Sunday morning, how many people would you see and how would they conduct themselves?

A. Moscow's 50 churches are usually spilling over on Saturday nights and Sundays. The patriarch's Epiphany Cathedral congregation numbers up to 2,000 while the smaller churches draw several hundred each. On Sunday morning the two-hour services are repeated past noon.

Q. Do you think the likelihood of war with Russia has lessened?

A. Definitely yes. World tensions have gradually been reduced since the end of the Korean War, culminating with the Geneva conference. Aside from the progress toward normalization of East-West relations in the last two years, there is growing realization there is a military stalemate as the result of nuclear weapons which make war mutually suicidal. The H-bomb is probably the strongest single deterrent to war.

Around Hollywood

Hollywood—(U.P.)—Betty Hutton thought her first television show was such a fiasco she quit show business.

But Tuesday the bouncy blonde will try for a TV comeback "to prove to myself I'm not a failure."

The downfall in the reviews of "Satin and Spurs" was one of TV's most controversial moments a year ago. Most critics frowned upon the show, a musical with new tunes written just for Betty. The program was the first color 90-minute "spectacular" and drew more sharp-eyed notice than future programs.

Miss Hutton took one look at the reviews and retired from show business. But later she took another look at the good review of her "farewell" nightclub act and decided to stick around.

Very Nervous
NBC asked Betty to give TV a second chance, so she'll star in a variety show Tuesday with guest stars Bob Hope and Jimmy Durante.

"I'm very nervous," bubbled the singer during a rehearsal today. "I realize I have a lot at stake—let's not kid each other."

The boisterous star gives husband Alan Livingston credit for inducing her to try TV again.

"Since I married Alan I've

regained confidence," she said. "He felt I should do a show that I know how to do—numbers from my nightclub act and my own songs."

"He wants me to feel I haven't failed. He felt I did not have the right material before, and there was no point in my leaving TV on a bad note. He wants me to prove to the world that 'Satin and Spurs' wasn't all my fault."

Seek Support

As Betty points out, TV has mended its ways since that first "spectacular." Now tried-and-true musicals with familiar tunes are used. Or, when new tunes are written for a show, such as "Our Town," they are released weeks in advance on records so the public can get used to them.

"I hope people will be pulling for me and be on my side," said Betty. "I want them to understand this is not a 'spectacular' or in color. It's only an hour show, and not a big epic."

"If I stink this time, I'll be awfully sick inside. I'm not the greatest singer in the world; I'm pretty hokey. But I give my heart to the people—so I'm sure the people, if not the critics, will enjoy my show."

Muscles make up 44.1 per cent of the weight of the average human body while the brain accounts for 1.9 per cent of the weight.



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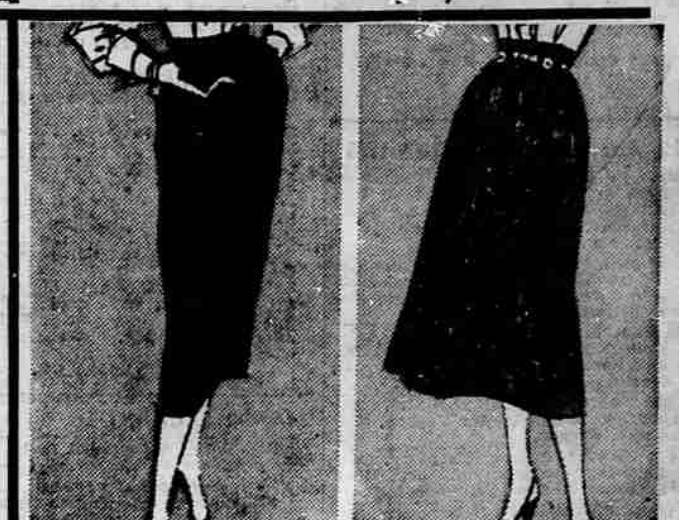
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