

# Russian Humor Is Reflected in Classical Literary Tradition

By HENRY SHAPIRO  
United Press International  
MOSCOW (UPI)—A joke going around Moscow these days goes like this:  
Khrushchev was travelling incognito in Soviet farm areas. He inquired of one old peasant about local conditions and got a glowing report on agricultural prosperity. The premier interrupted to identify himself and demand an honest account.  
"I beg your pardon, Comrade Khrushchev," said the peasant.

"I thought you were an American reporter."  
Then there was the question-and-answer humor show on "Radio Armenia."  
"What should I do to avoid pregnancy?" an anxious girl wrote.  
"Absolutely nothing," was the reply.  
In the Western stereotype, the Russian is often viewed as a morbid, introspective, Dostoyevsky-like type.  
There is little in the Western image of the Russian to show

that he can be gay as an Italian, as witty or ribald as a Frenchman, as humorous as an American.  
Despite his tragic history and his experience with war and poverty, despotism, revolution and famine, he still can laugh as heartily as anyone.  
Soviet humor is reflected in the classical literary tradition, in the works of such great satirical writers as Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Saltykov-Schedrin and in the short stories of Anton Chekhov.  
The tradition was maintained after the revolution in the works of Mikhail Zoshchenko and the team of two novelists who wrote under the name of "Ilf and Petrov."

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The Russian's normal fare of humor, however, is not limited to the literary classics. Nor is it confined to the official type of humor, or published by the weekly "Crocodile," the sole publication of its kind in the Russian language.  
Avoids Satire  
Crocodile, with a circulation of two million, leans heavily on text and cartoons in ridiculing

capitalism and blasting Soviet bureaucrats. But it avoids domestic political satire.  
Although it can be funny it is often so heavy in style and content that a Moscow wit wrote a letter to the editors proposing "at least one weekly column of humor."  
One could hardly expect self-critical humor from a magazine published by Pravda, the Communist party organ. The editor's chair cannot be too easy as witnessed by the fact that in the 41 years of its existence, Crocodile has changed editors-in-chief 13 times.  
Another source of fun is the Moscow circus (now touring the United States), a unique, intimate style institution of its kind whose single ring produces both belly laughs and subtle satire through the medium of its great clowns, Karandash and Popov.

The Soviet clown, unlike his American counterpart, speaks as well as acts. He mimics, jokes and quips. He ridicules many aspects of daily reality but he manages to maintain a delicate "tight rope" balance by staying away from political touchiness.  
This is equally true of the humorists on the vaudeville stage and on radio and television. Moscow television has recently introduced a popular 10-minute skit called "The Wick," produced by poet and fable writer Sergei Mikhailov.  
"The Wick" can be funny as it is vitriolic in lampooning Soviet life — the insolence of bureaucracy, managerial inefficiency, institutional corruption and economic wastefulness.  
So it is that demand for humor is further fed by occasional cartoons in newspapers, regular columns of jokes and cartoons in the weekly magazines, comic strips in children's newspapers and satirical short stories in the literary monthlies.  
Probably the most important outlet for the off-beat type of humor craved by Russians is the anecdote.  
Many of these word of mouth jokes are attributed to the mythical "Radio Armenia."  
At the time Allen Dulles resigned from his last major post

in the government, "Radio Armenia" reported "Dulles was fired because the CIA could not locate our radio."  
Current Favorites  
Here are a few of the more harmless anecdotes making the rounds.  
—A man knocked at the door of Yuri Gagarin's apartment which was opened by the spaceman's child. Gagarin was still in orbit and the child promptly replied: "Daddy will be back in an hour." "When will your mother return?" asked the visitor. "I cannot tell," the child said, "because Momma has queued up to buy oranges and you never know how long that takes."  
—A cautious bureaucrat was asked by a job-seeker what kind of work he could do to avoid trouble. "It does not mat-

ter what you do," he advised, "as long as you do nothing."  
China looms large in the recent crop of jokes in reflection of the Sino-Soviet split as illustrated by the following stories:  
—Hotel Peking, one of the new hostilities in central Moscow, has been renamed "Hotel Washington."  
—After the outbreak of "The Sino-Soviet War" the Russians capture one million Chinese prisoners the first day, five million the second day and 10 million the third day. On the fourth day the Russians "capitulate."  
—A man in a cafe asks for a cup of tea. "Is it Russian or Chinese tea that you want?" says the waitress. After hesitating a moment the customer decides. "On second thought I would rather have a cup of cocoa."

## Problem Facing Educators Reviewed At NOMA Meeting

The pressing problem confronting all educators today is the ever increasing quantity of material which students are expected to learn within the same framework of time upon which schools have traditionally been operating, William E. Ruck, director of the Oregon Program in the Medford schools, told the National Office Management Association meeting here last week.  
Speaking at the Hotel Medford, Ruck listed the means by which Medford is trying to meet this problem while continuing to improve the quality of education.

As a participant in the Oregon Program, Medford School District is a recipient of funds made available through a grant from the Ford Foundation. This money can be used only for research and inservice training of teachers, but it has made it possible for Medford to pursue new practices and techniques which would not have been otherwise possible, Ruck pointed out.  
Four Major Steps  
Four major steps are being taken by Medford to solve the modern problem. They are to improve the training of teachers, to make more effective use of teacher talent, to make more effective use of teacher time, and to make more effective use of student time.  
Team teaching, now operating on a limited scale in the high school, two junior high schools and two elementary schools is making more effective use of teacher talent.  
Flexible scheduling results in more effective use of teacher and student time.  
Teacher aides are taking over many of the non-instructional duties of teachers, making it possible for the teacher to spend more time in the instructional process.  
The intern teacher proposal, worked out in cooperation with Southern Oregon College, is providing additional experience and training that will produce a better trained, more highly qualified beginning teacher.  
The grant to the state was \$3.5 million, Ruck stated. Medford received \$100,000 for the projects to be carried out here for the improvement of education.

## Area People Attend Credit Conference

Representatives of the Medford Credit Women's Breakfast Club of North America and credit departments of local bureaus and firms attended an Oregon Columbia Regional Credit Conference in Eugene recently.  
Attending from the women's group were Mrs. Alice Theis, president, Mrs. Zoe Theis, Mrs. Doris Johnson and Mrs. Carolyn Russell. Mrs. Russell also attended as a delegate from the Jackson County Retail Credit Association and Mrs. Johnson also represented the Grants Pass Credit Women's Breakfast Club.  
Charles Roberts also was a delegate for the retail group; Hugh Rogers, manager of the local Credit Bureau attended, and Rod Robinson was Credit Bureau Customer Service representative.

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## Jackson Urges Means at Crater Lake to Get Tourists to Water

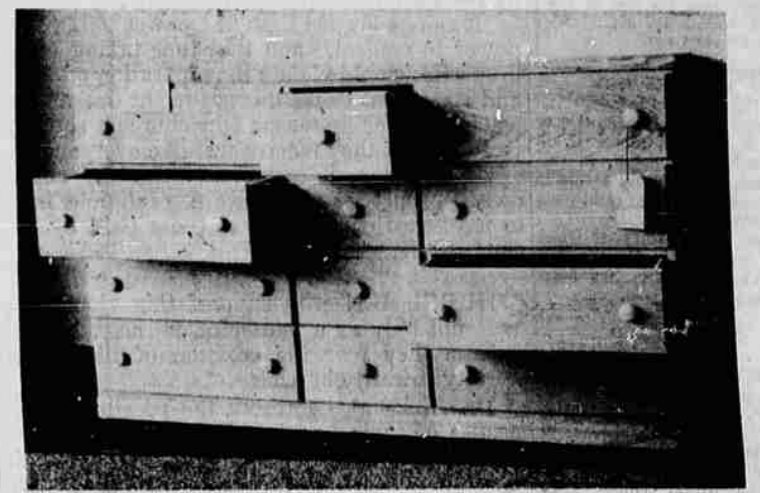
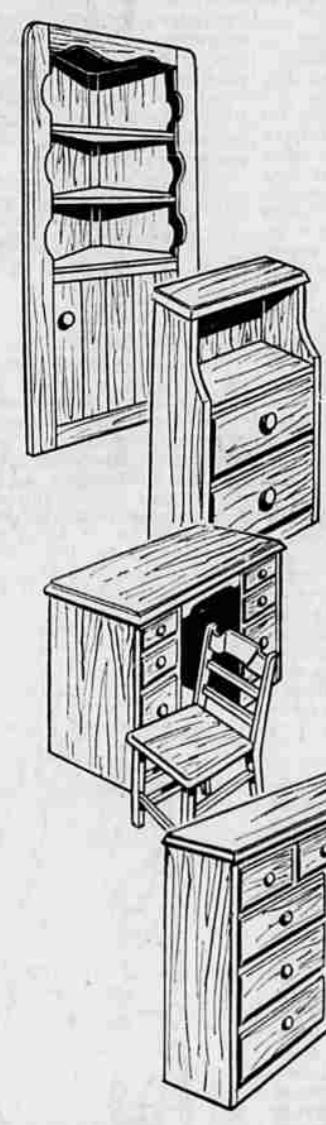
SALEM (UPI)—Oregon State Highway Commission Chairman Glenn L. Jackson Friday proposed a new facility for tourists at Crater Lake, one which would enable them to get down to the water's edge conveniently.  
The suggestion was made by the Medford industrialist during an address to the convention of the County Parks Association here.  
Jackson told the group that some means should be provided to get visitors to the water at Crater Lake National Park. He said that half of the 592,000 visitors to the state's only national park in 1962 stayed less than an hour.  
"Crater Lake is an outstanding national park — The unfortunate part is that it is a huge picture with no animation," Jackson said if people could get to the surface of the lake easily it would open the way for boat trips, fishing and other recreation.  
"If we provided something to do and facilities to get people to the lake it would increase the number of people visiting the park and the length of their stay," Jackson said.  
Scenic Values  
"I don't think it would be out of line to ask the National Park Service to design some kind of service to get to the lake which

would not destroy its scenic values," he said.  
Previous proposals to provide mechanical tramways from the edge of the one-time volcano to the water have met with strong opposition from outdoor groups, who fear the lake's beauty would be destroyed.  
Jackson said Oregon now has more parks than any other state and noted that 60 per cent of the visitors are from out-of-state.  
He said California parks "are rapidly becoming coney islands" and that Oregon is "gradually falling heir to the recreational responsibility" for many Californians.

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