

## Personal Impressions Of Russia

By Dean John W. Shirley  
(originally printed in the Technician of N. C. State College.)

Though I had, like most Americans, followed the news of Russia and its allied states in newspapers and magazines and in popular books, several aspects of the society I found there had completely escaped me. I question whether anyone can truly appreciate what Russia is and what Communism means.

We had been briefed for two days in New York by specialists in the Soviet; we had evening seminars throughout the whole five weeks in Russian history, Russian political theory, and Russian education, given by members of the exchange specifically selected for their knowledge of and previous experience in Russia.

We were all afraid of being brain-washed—of being confused by false accounts by Russian educators. Part of this newly, more acute perception is reflected in my personal reaction during the five weeks. Each member of our group constantly checked with others and gave himself a soul-searching analysis of his own impressions. We analyzed the theories propounded in the ministries in comparison with what actually went on in classrooms. We questioned intently every Russian we met, from Rectors and Ministers to janitors and school children, taxi drivers and elevator operators.

I personally found that I went through three stages during my five weeks. My first week in Moscow was spent in an attitude of personal fear. I was somewhat afraid to walk alone through the Kremlin or in Red Square. I feared the secret police, and looked over my shoulder for people who might be tailing me. I arranged traps in my hotel room to see if the secret police had gone through my papers or had X-rayed my films. I even looked behind pictures for secret microphones. But when I discovered (or at least thought I discovered) that no one was interested in bothering me, this personal fear relaxed, and I assumed some of the more objective attitudes of an American, who was making a free and open investigation of a strange new world.

The second stage came during the second and third weeks. I was greatly impressed by the material poverty of the people by our standards—by the crowded living conditions, the lack of cars and fine clothes, the dull and prosaic foods. At the same time I was profoundly touched by the friendliness of the Russian people, by their anxiousness to talk with Americans to assure us that they had only peace and friendship for us, though they felt our government was out to make war with them. They were obviously hard-working, almost puritanical in their austere life, uncomplaining, and optimistic about the future. They seemed free and happy; they loved their children deeply, and were determined that they would have a finer, happier life than their own generation had had. They evidenced frank, honest, intelligent, warm and friendly attitudes of all of us.

Had I returned home at the end of the third week, I fear I would have been forced in honesty to have given a glowing tribute to the Russian people, and to the Communist government which had done and was doing so much for the welfare of its citizens. But somehow, about the start of the fourth week, I began to change my attitudes. The fundamental purposes of the alike; there seemed to be no dissimilarity became more apparent. No single episode, no single person, made this impact on me, but the massive, uncritical affirmation of the people began to be felt. Everyone thought alike; everyone felt sent, no individual variation. There was no place in this society for controversy or individual opinion. The whole society seemed dedicated

to wiping out internal or individual conflict. The individual had no meaning; the group meant everything, and the individual had been tailored to see life not through his own eyes, but through the collective eyes of the society. Then the whole massive weight of the society seemed to become apparent to me. Here was Carlyle's "Everlasting Yea" in actuality, and I wanted nothing more than to shout "NO" with my full power.

I am saying only that the USSR is a Communistic nation. I had known this, but I had been incapable of believing it. Like most of us, I had assumed that Communism was a political philosophy; that the Communist party dominated the Soviet Union, but that the people were like us, living under a different form of government. I was discovering that Communism was not a political philosophy: it was a way of life and a way of thinking completely antagonistic to everything that a person of democratic instincts and training holds dear. When I left the Moscow airport, I was convinced that these two philosophies could not live together in peace in a single world. I recall am not completely sure. I recall the apparent absolutism of the Nazi philosophy in Germany, and realize that many of those people have been reconverted. But I seriously question if the Nazis were as effective in molding their people as the Communists have been. Fascism was an emotional unification; Communism is intellectual, and therein lies its chief danger. It may well be that if we go Communist our people will be happy as the Russian people are; I can only know that in large part our generation could not be.

One other aspect of the society which I had not expected impressed itself on me: Russia is an oriental nation, not an occidental one. I had known that racially the Slavs had intermingled with the Tatars and Mongols, but I had been taken in by the veneer of western culture and dress that has dominated Russia since the time of Peter the Great. But it is obvious to an acute observer that in fundamental culture—in music, drama, dance, architecture—the Moscow culture is essentially oriental. This is reflected in the brightly colored exterior of St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square, in the marble interiors of the old cathedrals of the Kremlin, the marble interiors and elaborate chandeliers of the Moscow Metro, in the marble halls and ornate towers of the University of Moscow.

It is likewise reflected in the turn of mind of the modern Russian. Time after time it came home to me that the University Professor or administrator with whom I talked, though he was dressed in the same way I was, looked like an American or German or Englishman, and talked the same language I was speaking, thought differently from the way I thought. Part of this was the Communist philosophy which put up barriers we could not cross; but part seemed to be a quality of mind which reminded me of mid-Asian or far Eastern people I have known.

It is my personal conviction that much of our difficulty in political negotiation with the Soviets comes from this oriental twist, rather than from the difference in our philosophical approaches. It we are to live in the same world with these people, we must study and recognize how they think, and adjust our speech, our actions, and our threats and promises to their kind of understanding and mode of reasoning.

## Class Of 1959 Encounter New Experiences

By Susan Hughes

The Class of 1959 has now become a part of the "cold cruel world" and are all working at some new endeavor — be it teaching, housewifery, or more study. It is rather hard to keep in touch with all the girls who graduate from Salem, but we thought that we would try and see what some of them are doing.

Of course the education department has representatives in quite a few areas. Ruth Bennett and Anne Summerell are in Lansdown, Pennsylvania; Margaret Fletcher is teaching Public School Music near Albany, New York; Shirley Hardy is teaching in Charlotte; in Raleigh are Peggy Newsome, and Margaret Taylor; in Winston-Salem, Martha McClure and Sarah Ann Price; and Faye McDuffie is teaching at a Moravian Mission School in Alaska.

Those who are furthering their education are: Jean Smitherman, in the School of Journalism at the University of North Carolina; Margaret MacQueen, also at U. N. C. in the Classics (specifically, Latin); Sue Cooper (Thue from Thelma) is in the History Department at Carolina; Mary Jane Mayhew is using her scholarship for study at Union Theological Seminary in New York City; Joan Milton is at the University of North Carolina; and of course Frankie is in Frankfurt, Germany, studying organ and harpsichord with her Fulbright Scholarship. I heard that she is a little bit homesick, even though she lived with a good German family for a while. She now has an apartment with a German girl.

Back in the United States, New York City, Marcille Van Liere holds the enviable position as page at the National Broadcasting Company (better known as NBC), and Jane Leighton Bailey is working for a Presbyterian Church in the big city. Patty Kimbrough is also part of the Salem delegation to "yankee-land." A little bit closer home is Marilyn Schull, who is in Washington, D. C. Ann Brinson is at home in Winston-Salem working for International Business Machines.

And of course there are the many who got married, such as Camille Suttle, Hila Moore, June Gesson, Rachel Rose, and on and on. We see Erwin Robbins once in a while in the Dairy Barn, for she works just up the hill at the Moravian Music Foundation.

The latest bulletin as that Ann Howes Sprinkle and Dex have a new little boy, born on the sixteenth of October.



## Sally Spangler, Sophomore, Wins Regional Singer Sewing Contest

By Barbara Altman

Nimble fingers and beauty plus enabled Sally Spangler to take top prize this summer in the Singer Sewing Machine's national "Young Style-maker" contest. Modeling the green chiffon-over-taiffetta cocktail dress which she designed and tailored, Sally first won the Danville city contest and then took top honors in a regional competition in Charlotte.

National run-offs in New York will determine whether or not Sally wins again, this time for sweepstakes including \$800. plus a trip to Paris for her and a companion.

Room 7, Sister's House, which she shares with Gail Ogburn of Smithfield, displays hints of Sally's sewing ability in blue gingham drapes and dust ruffles which she made this summer.

Sewing, for Sally, is just like swimming, "I can't remember when I couldn't." She began making doll clothes, and "when I outgrew the dolls, I made things a little bit bigger."

A sophomore and home economics major at Salem, Sally plans a career in the fashion world. "I'd like to study design in New York one summer before I graduate from Salem,

and someday I hope to combine design and modeling for what I think will be an exciting work." Sally is an active member of Dansalems and is chairman of the Home Ec. Clubs "we'll make it fit" alterations project. Her talents spoke for her recently at the National Tobacco Festival in Richmond, Va., which she attended as "Miss Danville." During the four-day fete Sally modeled fashions that were Spangler designs."

A native of Danville, Sally will make her debut this Christmas season at the Southside Virginia Debutante Ball.

A favorite of Sister's girls entertainers, Sally's night club act in which she does an interpretation—complete with an accent — of "Love Paris" is indicative of her hopeful eye on a third win in Singer's sewing contest.

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