

Credits and Debits

By Rev. Benedict Ekmann

Here are the fifteen most popular books in the nation's rental libraries, as of July 1st, with an evaluation of each of them:

1. *The Banks of Hell*, by Mary Jane Ward. For adult readers, this novel of life in a mental hospital is a masterpiece of fiction.
2. *The Night of the Hunter*, by Betty Harte. A novel of suspense and horror.
3. *The House of Mirth*, by L. E. Busch. A novel of social life in New York.
4. *The House of the Seven Gables*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. A classic novel of New England life.
5. *The House of the Spirits*, by Isabel Allende. A novel of magical realism.
6. *The House of the Living Dead*, by Edgar Allan Poe. A collection of horror stories.
7. *The House of the Dead*, by Charles Dickens. A novel of prison life.
8. *The House of the Dead*, by Dostoevsky. A novel of prison life.
9. *The House of the Dead*, by Tolstoy. A novel of prison life.
10. *The House of the Dead*, by Gorky. A novel of prison life.
11. *The House of the Dead*, by Pasternak. A novel of prison life.
12. *The House of the Dead*, by Solzhenitsyn. A novel of prison life.
13. *The House of the Dead*, by Solzhenitsyn. A novel of prison life.
14. *The House of the Dead*, by Solzhenitsyn. A novel of prison life.
15. *The House of the Dead*, by Solzhenitsyn. A novel of prison life.

I Chose Freedom By Victor Krauchenko

This is the ninth installment of "I Chose Freedom," by Victor Krauchenko, a former Soviet official and engineer. This week he reveals how the Stalinites rewrite history and explores the myth of Communist industrial progress.

CHAPTER XVI
"Increasing" Production

At the railroad station in Sverdlovsk (formerly Yekaterinburg and famous as the city in which the last Tsar and his family were slaughtered) I was met by an official from the Novotrubnik plant. As we drove the forty miles to Perovsk, he brought me up to date on the plant. My worst forebodings were confirmed.

I would have to bring orderly production out of physical chaos and moral collapse. Some six thousand workers and their families—a total of seventeen or eighteen thousand people—were living under primitive conditions. The only ones who could be counted on not to run away were those born in the district and the forced-labor groups on construction jobs. The technical personnel, or what was left of it after the purges, was demoralized.

Slave Labor

I had been at work less than two weeks when the chief bookkeeper brought me a memorandum from the district office. It stated the document I needed a curious sum—a considerable sum—"to the N.K.V.D."

"What's that for?" I asked, puzzled.

"That's under our labor contract for the 1947 laborers assigned to your section. Half their wages goes to the N.K.V.D."

"Are they from one of the concentration camps?"

"No, no, Comrade Krauchenko. That's quite another department of the N.K.V.D. The contract laborers live here, like the free workers, but they have no backs of their own. They are men deported here for various crimes."

Subsequently I was told by the director of other sections that all of them had consented to this forced labor—200,000 of them—eighty-five percent of them. The free workers did not associate with them, and in any part of the plant one could usually pick them out by their exceptionally dilapidated appearance.

We began the appalling task at the factory of digging our way out of the confusion. Within a few months the place was scarcely recognizable. By May we had not only raised production to 60 per cent—an achievement that had seemed impossible when I first arrived—but had improved the quality. Impurities in our pipes declined from an average of 12 per cent to an average of 3 or 4 per cent.

Moscow took cognizance of the remarkable improvement at the Novotrubnik. According to a report in the industrial magazine, the plant had been in a bad way until the arrival of "Krauchenko," active young engineer and Party member," changed the picture.

The Money

When I think back to my sojourn in the Urals, filled with odious memories, and dismal episodes, it seems that I had played an important part in the big and little officials in Moscow and in Perovsk, worked together to dupe the public. They did it so expertly, dovetailing their lies so expertly, that to this day the "great victory at the Novotrubnik plant" is cited as an example of the wonders worked by "socialist enthusiasm."

The affair began with the noisy arrival of a brigade of Urals workers from Moscow under instructions to boost Stakhanovite speed-up standards at our pipe-rolling plant. Now that we were producing 63 per cent of the norm, one big Moscow-style heave and shove would push us "over the top" to 100 per cent or more.

Only yesterday we were commended for reaching 63—now outside pressure was being applied to drive us to 100. Director Osadchik went around with a long face.

"We've got to do something drastic," Victor Andreysovich" his friend. He asked me to provide him with a detailed inventory of finished pipe accumulated in our warehouses. The quantity, it appeared, was considerable.

Not until later did I realize why he needed this information and I was horrified. Osadchik, in accordance with the "widespread" special agent to Moscow who came to a secret under standing with Kozhevnikov, now



Generalissimo-Dictator-Premier Stalin poses with Maria Demchenko, a peasant girl who was Russia's "Miss Sugar Beets of 1938." Maria was sent to the Moscow Stakhanovite Congress and was awarded a scholarship for her part in the Soviet speed-up system known as Stakhanovism, which forms part of this week's chapter of "I Chose Freedom," by Victor Krauchenko.

get my action. Whatever happened, my record was clear. In sober fact, nothing happened. Too many influential bureaucrats were involved in that piece of charlatanism. The "magnificent victory" became a solemn history.

CHAPTER XVII
While History is Edited

The publication in 1933 of a new official History of the Communist Party marked the tapering off of the super-purge. It did not mean that the terror was stopped, that the Black Ravens remained unemployed.

"Normal" arrests by the thousand, executions without trial, arbitrary exile of "undesirable elements" whose labor was desirable in forsaken regions, tortures and liquidations continued. The population of concentration camps and forced labor colonies multiplied as never before. Already, among Communists close to the Kremlin throne, whispered estimates placed the slave labor forces at more than fifteen million in the next few years for a total of twenty million.

Genghis Khan was an amateur, a muddler, compared to Stalin. The Kremlin clique had carried through a ruthless war on their own country and people.

It was the wind-up of this long war that was signaled by the appearance of a new history. Shamelessly, without so much as an explanation, it revised half a century of Russian history. It was bold, specious, conscienceless fiction. There was a certain magnificence in its unabridged cynicism, its defiance of the common sense of the Russian people. The roles of leading historical figures were perverted or altogether erased. New roles were invented for others. Leon Trotsky, one of the creators of the Red Army, was represented as a Russian agent of foreign espionage who had sought to sell out his country in collusion with Rykov, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bubnov, Krestinsky, Platkov and virtually all the other Fathers of the Bolshevik Revolution. Joseph Stalin, of course, emerged as the sole leader inside Russia before the revolution, and as Lenin's one intimate and trusted associate thereafter. All books, articles, documents, museum materials which contradicted this extraordinary fantasy paradigm as history—and that means nearly all historical and political writings and documentation—disappeared throughout the country.

More than that, living witnesses, as far as possible, were removed. The directing staff of the Institute of Marx, Engels and Lenin, in Moscow, repository of ideological truth, were removed and the more important people among them imprisoned or shot. The same thing happened in branches of the Institute in various parts of the country.

Party Cards

Another result of the big purge deserves mention. Every Communist in the country was given a Party card.

I looked on the editor of the industrial magazine. He professed to be horrified when I laid the facts of the fraud before him and urged me to write an article about it before I left Moscow. I did, and I sent a copy to Pravda. I never heard again from either of those newspapers, nor did I ever hear from Kaganovich.

I took months before various officials and factory colleagues forgave my "betrayal" and smiled at me again; but I did not re-

American Voices—IV

By John O'Connor

I am the editor-bigot. I dwell in all creeds. I usually operate at a profit. I cloak my prejudices in my own peculiar theology, my patriotism in my own concept of American tradition.

No one can raise the cry of "persecution" as fast as I. No one would like more to be a censor of books, plays, movies, morals or men than I. I am the guardian of morality. I am the arbiter of the arts in my own circle.

I go to press once a week. This gives me time to get up a special batch of half-truths to use against my opponents. I delight my coteries with my fearless stand against enemies far away. I attack the things my readers do not like. I far more prefer to remain popular with my readers by attacking distant or obvious things than to single out the vicious political and moral condition that might exist within the shadow of my own office.

After all, I cannot offend the friends or relatives of my high-placed backers.

I usually exist due to the patronage of a wealthy group, a zealous group—or the silent backing of some otherwise respected holder of public office or corporate enterprise. If it were not for patronage, I would not be a managing editor. If it were not for prejudice, I would not be a financial success.

I never build. I always attack and attempt to destroy. I usually run drives for funds to aid this cause, or that martyr or group of martyrs. I attack major magazines of national circulation that I may, appear fearless. I am not so much concerned with the reaction they might have to my attacks. But my loyal coteries squeal with delight and calls me a crusader . . . and sustains circulation.

I work cheaply. My chief source of news is a good paper which is carefully scanned for news I will be able to slant. I consistently reprint the views of those commentators whose views coincide with mine and those of my fine, intelligent, clean, sincere, humble, learned, pious, patriotic readers. These prints are carefully screened to show who agrees with me. I would not think of carrying any feature or news item that might not fit my pattern. Time might prove it right.

I run a page or two of letters from correspondents. Usually, I let the letters praise me. The same letter writers help fill the correspondence column every week. Very often they are stronger or more radical or careless of facts and principles than the editorial

I am the editorial bigot, the biggest editor. As long as cupidity and stupidity, pride and prejudice remain—so shall I.

I am honest, patriotic, humble, prayerful, intelligent, and home-loving. I like my readers, and my readers like me. After all, we are the last guardians of truth on earth.

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