

Our Own Kind

By Ray, Benedict Shuman

It is a pleasant, heart-warming novel about the life of a young Irish-American in Providence, Rhode Island. It doesn't pat anybody's back; neither does it pat anybody's head. It is a story of a young man who grows up in a family that is proud of its Irish heritage. The story is told in a simple, straightforward manner, with a focus on the character's development and the challenges he faces. The author, Ray Benedict Shuman, captures the essence of the immigrant experience and the struggle for identity in a new land. The novel is a testament to the resilience and spirit of the Irish-American community.

I Chose Freedom By Victor Krauchenko

Victor Krauchenko, former Soviet official who escaped from Russia, outlines his sensational revelations of life under Stalin. This is the book's introduction.

XVIII

Walls Kerope Fight

The treaty of friendship between Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin which precipitated war in Europe will be forever bound up in my mind with the struggling Siberian city where I worked at the time. It was at Kemerovo in August, 1939, that I saw the first atomic bomb across the ocean and crash landing into the midst and consciousness of the Party members. It left us all astounded, bewildered and groggy with disbelief.

Only a few weeks before the pact we had listened, at a Party meeting, to a boring familiar lecture on the world situation. As always, Hitler figured as the arch-enemy, creature and tool of the world plutocracy which was preparing to strike at the weak Soviet Union.

Not until we saw newspaper and newspaper pictures showing a smiling Stalin shaking hands with Mr. Ribbentrop did we begin to crowd the incredible. The swastika and the hammer and sickle flitting side by side in Moscow! And soon thereafter Molotov explaining to us that Fascism was after all, "a matter of taste!" Stalin greeting his fellow-dictator with fervent words about their "friendship sealed in blood!"

In the light of future events, one thing should be made clear: Stalin entered into his compact with Hitler in earnest. Any whisper against Germany, any voice of sympathy for Hitler's victims, was treated as a new species of counter-revolution. The French, British, Norwegian "warmongers" were "getting their deserts."

Forty-seven million rubles had been assigned for my work in Kemerovo in 1939. By the end of 1939, the necessary preparations had been made and we were ready to start on the main

of state sweat and squashed bedbugs made me slightly nauseous. Very little daylight filtered in through the dirty barred windows. Several small electric bulbs hung from the ceiling, but they were not burning now.

The barracks was so cold that our breath was visible, but many of the women were only half-dressed. The great majority were in their twenties and thirties. Many of them, I could judge by their faces and remnants of their old clothes, were intellectuals.

The "bunk" was bare boards, perhaps four feet wide, attached to heavy beams in two tiers — just a strip of double sheeting, without any sort of bedding. Here the prisoners slept, one on a shelf, in their clothes, some ragged garment rolled up for a pillow under their heads. Near the center of the hall stood a small wood-burning stove, a thickly inadequate for a barracks this size. Except for a few sloop buckets for the prisoners' physical needs, near the entrance, there was no furniture, no benches, no tables, literally nothing.

On arriving at a camp, prisoners were deprived of all letters, photographs, — of relatives and friends and all other reminders of the free world beyond. Bed linen and even such elementary comforts as toothbrushes and scissors were taken away from them. They were provided with a metal cup and bowl and a wooden spoon. Books, paper and pencils were strictly prohibited and it goes without saying, there were no radio receivers. Correspondence with relatives was neither allowed nor physically possible.

Not suspecting that all my Kemerovo effort was being tossed into the garbage bin, I was pleased with the sudden summons to Moscow at the end of December. I assumed that something more serious was involved than final consultations on our 1940 plans. But I found Comrade Kozhevnikov looking very grave.

"I have had news for you, Victor Andreyevich," he said. "There's a Central Committee and Sovnarkom decision to stop work for the time being on the Kemerovo pipe-drawing project. Another job."

While waiting for a new assignment, I remained on the payroll of Gektrabotst. The unaccustomed leisure tasted sweet. Like most Russians, I like Moscow best in its hushed winter mood of brief days and crystal light nights, when its life is muted in thick blankets of snow. Gektrabotst was considering a suitable post for me as to my own preferences. I was weary of the years of wandering and yearned with every nerve for a settled home life. I was eager to remain in Moscow. It seemed a paradise by contrast with the rest of the country. In the end I was given work in Moscow — in a metallurgical mill in the outskirts of the city. The assistant chief engineer I carried the main responsibility for actual production.

The director, Manturov, tall, red-headed, every inch of his face covered with freckles, was a rough-hewn, self-educated fellow, inclined to conceal his total ignorance of everything technical with confused bluster. He had attained some fame as a partisan fighter in the civil war and still lived on this political capital. Though he had headed industrial enterprises for many years, their operation remained an enigma to him and sometimes he actually resented the engineers who knew their way about.

His comrade and main support was Comrade Yegorov, Party secretary for the factory as well as chief of the Special Department. A short, stocky, middle-aged man with his bushy eyebrows, he was self-important by reason of his connection with the Economic Department of the N.K.V.D. When he stalked through the shops and offices with a possessive air, some of the workers behind his back muttered about "our little Stalin."

On June 20, two days before the invasion, I had addressed a political meeting of workers and employees on the "imperialist war." My talk followed the prescribed line. Germany, I repeated, was eager for peace despite its great victories, but British imperialists, backed up by American finances, insisted on prolonging the war.

Neither I, nor anyone outside the inner Kremlin circle, knew that as early as January the State Department in Washington had warned our Ambassador, Constantine Oumansky, that Hitler was making ready to strike at Russia. The warning was repeated by Mr. Sumner Welles five weeks later and reinforced by similar British advices. They were all dismissed as capitalist tricks intended to break the beautiful friendship guaranteed by the Hitler-Stalin pact. Cautious warnings had also been conveyed to their superiors by Soviet agents in Germany. They reported ominous movements of troops in our direction on a scale too vast for mere polling. Because I had a large acquaintance among officials of commissariats and factories producing tanks for the Nazi war machine, I had been in touch often with trade representatives just returned from Berlin. They were warned about Hitler's intentions. Germans had told them frankly, on occasion, that a clash was inevitable. But all this, too, Stalin and his court brushed aside as inspired mischief-making. They seemed mesmerized by their own propaganda.

And so the historic day got under way without much as a rumor to disturb its routine. Work at our plant was already in full blast when it was announced that we would pause to hear an important radio address by Commissar Molotov. This procedure was unusual and sent a tremor of apprehension through the plant. We made wild guesses as to the Commissar's subject. No one guessed the awful truth.

Molotov's stammering and fearful words left us all stunned. What could we conclude from his sensational announcement? The Fuhrer, crafty and deceitful, base and stupid, had unloosed his familiar blits on the country which for nearly two years had been depriving itself of sorely needed food, fuel, metals, oil and munitions to help him subdue Europe? We had scrupulously fulfilled our obligations. We had supported the Nazis not only with goods but with worldwide propaganda and diplomatic pressures. Now our reward was perjury.

In a few hours a Party speaker arrived. We called a lunch-hour meeting of all our workers. I sat on the platform, along with the director, Manturov, and the head of the factory Party Committee, Yegorov. I scanned the tired, frowning faces of our workers as the orator reviled the treachery of the German dictator and extolled the honesty of our own dictator. I saw anger, consternation, as well as weariness, bafflement and sorrow. Some of the women cried.

Both Manturov and Yegorov made speeches in which they repeated, feebly, awkwardly, the new and strange slogans. It was not yet easy for any of us to refer to the "democratic countries" without an ironical inflection or to assail the Germans who only yesterday had been the victims of imperialist warmongering. It seemed fantastic to speak of England and France, so suddenly as partners in a common cause when we had so

long looked on them as the main threats to our national safety. Fifth Column!

A long time before, an N.K.V.D. friend had told me that in case of "war" all "dangerous elements" would be stamped out. In every village, town and city long blacklists were ready; hundreds of thousands would be taken into custody. He had not exaggerated. The liquidation of "internal enemies" was, in sober fact, the only part of the war effort that worked quickly and efficiently in the first terrible phase of the struggle. It was a purge of the rear in accordance with an elaborate advance plan, as ordered by Stalin himself.

Several years later, in America, I was to hear the amazing nonsense — apparently accepted even by intelligent Americans — that "there was no fifth column in Russia" because the blood-purges had wisely eradicated all "traitors" in advance. I read



German soldiers pass to eat in Vitebsk, Russia, during one of the early phases of "The Great Patriotic War," as Victor Krauchenko calls this installment of "I Chose Freedom." Oumansky, says Krauchenko, the "imperialist war" became a "war for democracy" to the wily propagandists of the Kremlin.

The Literary Corollary — American Voices—V

By John O'Connor

I am the Communist Press. I am my master's voice. I am the puppet press, the paper front for the moral quillings, the daily diet of the blindly faithful. I obey the instructions of men thousands of miles away. I do their slightest bidding. I am subservient to their every desire. I place their interests and the interests of their country above the welfare of my own country. I place expediency over principle and Marx over morality. The sworn enemy of the capitalist economy, I accept huge donations from eccentric millionaires and the foreign colony in Hollywood. The sworn enemy of religion, I exalt the cadaver of Lenin in Red Square.

I preach democracy but I believe in only one party. I continually reveal plots against Russia but I endorse Russia's policy of sticking her agents and her money into every country on the face of the earth — except Vatican City.

I lead crusades to free criminals, passport violators and arson experts in the United States but the regime that my master runs has the largest prison camps in history. I object to the delations of untruths in the American press but my master's country has only a controlled press. I am its first cousin.

I preach self-expression and mouth my support of new theories in art, but the art of the country behind the curtain has been strangled by censorship and the subordination of art to politics.

I am the master of the smear. My only rivals in this field are the gossip columnists of Broadway or Washington, and the various editor-bigots with their weekly screeds. My only enemy is truth — my only object of power.

I preach democracy but I prize dictatorship within my own ranks. I stay within the law but the would-be endeavor to corrupt the law. I pose as a friend of labor but I am an apologist for the most reactionary and anti-labor regime since the dawn of time. I use modern means of communication but I am out to control those means so that only those things which are favorable to me and my masters will reach the ears and eyes of the public. I wield an influence in book clubs, newspapers, radio news programs, Hollywood, Broadway and with the celebrities in the Goose Club. I exult in the support and am delightfully amazed at the gullibility of the Sunday night

newspapers who do so much of my work for me.

I cite the waste of money in cartels and corporations, but I get as many of my readers and supporters on the government payroll as I can. I use whatever information of a confidential nature which they may be able to forward to me from their key government jobs.

At my master's bidding I praised the rape of Poland, the stripping of Manchuria, the robbery in Iran and the dictatorship in Argentina. I have consistently smeared little Finland. I have supported a regime in Spain that slaughtered priests and nuns. I have demanded that America relinquish the atomic bomb. I am currently fanning the flames of World War III. When the War does come, I shall organize expensive benefits for the widows and orphans.

I am the Communist press. I am the lying dummy. I am the corrupter of youth and the cynical betrayer of old age. I am the adulterator of news and the poisoner of the wells of truth.

I have allies in "liberal" papers. I accept the aid of the rich who never earned their money because I cannot get support from the poor who prefer to count their nickels. It does not matter to me that some of my supporters achieved their huge fortunes by labor-baiting and the unjust wage. They are happy when I let them write an occasional editorial. The staff at their paper, faithful to me as I am to my master in Moscow, will take care of the slanting of the news and the presentation of the news.

I am the exploiter of the Negro for political reasons. I am the defender of the Jew for political reasons. I am the enemy of the Catholic Church for satanic reasons. None of my editors have gone to Moscow and none seem anxious to go there. But when my master tells them to attack correspondents and writers who have spent a long time there, they do. We are faithful, my editors and I.

I am the lowest form of journalism. I endorse mass murder and pragmatic power politics. I justify man-made famines and the imprisonment of small countries.

I am my master's voice. I am the Press of the Pit.

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