

# Behind the Iron Curtain

By John O'Connor

It is daily more patent that the Soviet Union is being transformed into a police state. The master plan of the Soviet for world domination is clear to trained consular and diplomatic experts. . . . An on the spot view that contrasts with the detente and optimism of the homogenous parlor politics. One veteran diplomat, for the moment anonymous, told Moore two years ago that you could safely expect action along the following lines:

1. Complete economic and political assimilation of Finland, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia;
2. Entry control of the Danubian and the Black Seas; open sea rights into the Mediterranean, but closed sea routes in the Black Sea;
3. At least 75% control of the Baltic Sea and the Kiel Canal;
4. Korea and Port Arthur "by republic" ownership of the United States and primary influence over all Manchuria and China down to the Yellow River;
5. Use of foreign capital and technical assistance if it can be obtained without relinquishing anything whatsoever;
6. More or less active assistance to force of upheaval and change in "twilight areas" like France, Italy, Spain, the Middle East, and China.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"We can be patient," any number of leading Communist figures told Moore in each of the many countries he visited. They make no pretense, they will deal with Moslems and monarchs, with socialists and landowners, with capitalists and big game. They feel that eventually the opening will be created for them to lead their nations to a more advanced country. Their more subtle and political programs are constantly alerted. We know of their persistence and their dynamism, we know their promise of economic heaven on earth, we know their plans to destroy the Faith. Next week, however, using Mr. Moore's book, let us see exactly what the living standards for the common man are.

You might want to clip the price lists I'm going to show you—and see if any of our Communist friends might care to trade with the prices in the homeland.

(To be continued)

Convent Wines Feted Chicago — (NC) — Awarded an all-expense-paid trip to Chicago as guest of Extension, National Catholic monthly magazine, Miss Mary Elizabeth Kelly of Arlington, Va., a student at St. Mary's College, in Navien, Kan., has arrived here.

She was guest of honor of the magazine's July issue and won the trip to Chicago in a competition among teenagers in Catholic colleges and high schools throughout the country.

# I Chose Freedom By Victor Kravchenko

This is Chapter Twenty-eight, the final one, of "I Chose Freedom," by Victor Kravchenko, former Soviet agent.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Fugitive from Injustice

The newspaper reports of my break with the Soviet regime said that, having tasted American democracy, I became disillusioned with Stalin's Communism. It was my direct experience of American freedom, they said, or implied, that led me to abandon the Soviet Purchasing Commission.

That made it a more dramatic story, as well as a pretty compliment to the U.S.A. But it wasn't true! The truth is that I had made up my mind long before to throw off the totalitarian shackles that, whatever the circumstances, I had been assigned to China or Patagonia rather than the United States. I would have made the same attempt to achieve freedom for the sake I had set myself.

Why did I continue to wear the straitjacket for seven months after I arrived in the United States? The answer is that I needed time to survey the terrain, to assess my psychological resources, before making the terrifying jump. In the same way a swimmer, having resolved to try to escape, above himself, to learn the habits of the guards and the geography of the neighborhood.

The Kuzman railed under the Soviet tutelage, emerging into the non-Soviet world for the first time, as a bewildered and almost helpless creature. The simplest adjustments to life became problems. I discovered that he thinks differently, feels differently, than those around him. He finds time to peel off layers after layers of his totalitarian conditioning. The process is a complicated one.

In America I was a stranger, without a single non-Soviet friend, without a language, with only the meager of economic survival. I had possessed as many open and concealed friends in America as in the Soviet Union. My problems would have been solved easily enough.

Ultimately, I treat, my engineering training and experience will enable me to make a living here. But at the moment of cutting loose from the Commission I would be, essentially, friendless, helpless against the awful machinery of column and vengeance at the disposal of my offended jailers. Seven months was actually a brief period to acclimate myself to America; to acquire a little vocabulary and a few human contacts.

I've at least a month to advance I knew that I would take the irrevocable step at the end of March, 1946. I spent most of that month in travel, two trips to Louisville, Penn., and one to Chicago. My main preoccupation was to safeguard my friends and colleagues in the Commission as well as in Russia. I did not believe my plans in any of them by word or gesture, though I needed confederates and naturally I had to confide in someone.

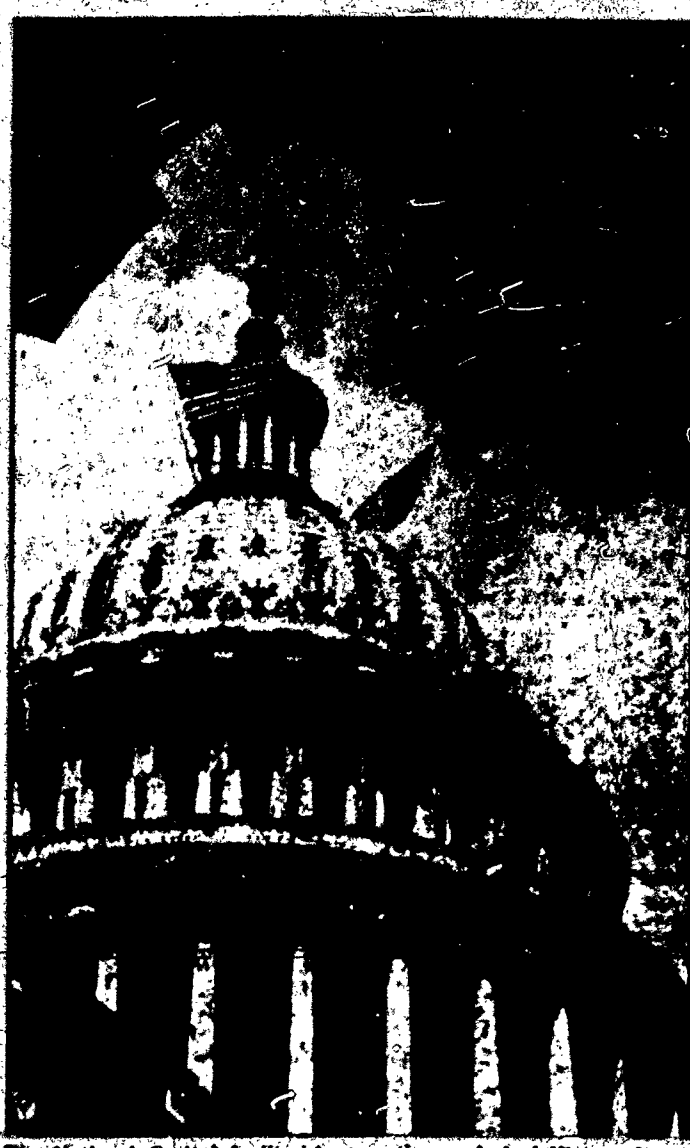
I have to confess that I would have to any Soviet citizen if there were so much as a shadow of guilt on his record, once the N.K.V.D. applied itself to my case.

A secondary preoccupation was to give the Commission no excuse for making wild charges against my character. My record in the vital lend-lease work entrusted to me had been flawless; I was eager that it should remain so to the very end. Insofar as possible, therefore, I wound up the work assigned to me, leaving everything in such organized shape that another material specialist could pick up where I left off. On my last morning in the headquarters of Sixteenth Street, I carefully straightened out my finances. Thirty dollars were still owing to me when I departed and I was pleased by this, though every dollar at the moment looked like a thousand.

I have told about the actual breakaway in the opening pages of this book. I had turned myself into a man without a country. I had made myself a target for the malice of American Communists and what was a lot more terrifying of their self-righteous fellow-travelers. I had made myself a target of the murderous hatred of the world's strongest and most implacable government.

At the time I left Washington I was aware that there was a formal decision of the Commission, ratified by Moscow, designating me to a permanent place on its staff. It amounted to a substantial promotion for one who had entered upon his work a few days later, on April 3, with Moscow's blessings. Later I might have returned, home with my foreign commercial experience as a faithful son of Stalin who had weathered the storms of bourgeois temptations. There was no limit to the heights I might then have scaled in the bureaucracy.

But on those heights I would have remained, no less a slave of the vast, helpless to any people in league with their oppressors. I had chosen to remain abroad. I needed freedom for the fight against despotism, and to attain that freedom I was accepting a multitude of



The National Capitol in Washington, the symbol of liberty that Victor Kravchenko saw for the first time after he arrived here from Russia. In today's chapter of "I Chose Freedom" Kravchenko expresses his hope for a deeper friendship between the peoples of this globe, and not only between the governments, (Continued)

discomforts, economic risks, physical dangers. From now on, Victor Kravchenko was no more. His identity was blotted out. Now he was Italian, Yugoslav, Portuguese, anything but Russian. What names I've had!

In an obscure and depressing uptown hotel in Manhattan I prepared the statement, part of which appeared in the New York Times and other papers on April 4, 1946. Reading it now, when the war has been victoriously concluded, there is nothing in the statement I would amend. On the contrary, time, it seems to me, has confirmed my fears and my warnings.

## POSTSCRIPT

I began to work on this book immediately after my escape from the Soviet Purchasing Commission and worked on it month after month under horrible conditions of persecution and threats against my life. I was obliged to wander from city to city, continually changing hotels and private residences, living under assumed names and assumed nationalities, finding safe hide-outs in the homes of friends to all of those who show me kindness and gave me moral support. I was hereby to expose my deep gratitude.

Had the Soviet agents caught up with me during this period, I might have been "erased," or worse, I might have been stripped to the Soviet Union for a "reckoning." Fortunately, this did not happen, so that today, for the first time in my life, I feel free to speak for my country, for my people, for myself.

What I left the Commission, was still under way. The urgency of the Western democratic and the totalitarian Soviet Union imposed great restraints upon me. I accepted those willfully, the need for a common victory took precedence over everything else. But now, with the war victoriously concluded, I consider it not only possible but my imperative duty to speak out fully and candidly, as effectively as I can. Hence this book.

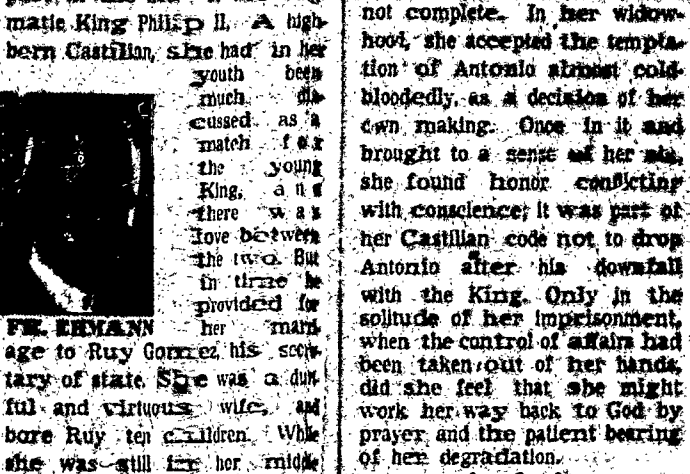
The people of my country are in the clutches of the police state. They cannot possibly make their own lives and their hopes and their destinies known to the world in the measure that I can reveal the true physiognomy of the Kremlin dictatorship to the peoples and governments of democratic countries. I feel that I am helping in a small way to warn the world against self-deception. For the building of a more decent world we need greater mutual understanding and deeper friendship between the peoples of this globe, and not only between the governments.

The Communist dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. is not a "problem for the Russian people only, or for the democracies only. It is the problem of all humankind. The world dare not continue indefinitely to turn its back on the martyrdom of a great segment of the human race inhabiting one-sixth of the earth's surface. This segment is ruled by a defiled group of leeches resting on the Party apparatus of the Politburo and a gigantic police force. Hundreds of millions of people in the U.S.S.R. have no voice in shaping their own destinies and are completely cut off from the progress and the streams of thought in all other countries.

# Contrition of Princess

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann

Kate O'Brien's new novel For One Sweet Grape is based on the strange history of Ana de Mendoza, sixteenth century princess of Spain who played an important and tragic part in the life of the emigrant King Philip II. A high-born Castilian, she had in her youth been much discussed as a match for the young King. As there was a love between the two, but it was not to be. She was married to Ruy Gomez, his secretary of state. She was a dutiful and virtuous wife, and bore Ruy ten children. While she was still in her middle thirties, her husband died, and the grief-stricken widow retired to her estate at Pastrana, in a fever of frustration, she applied to St. Teresa for entrance into her convent, but the affair ended in a fiasco. As late Philip called her back to her place in Madrid. This unexpected and almost unaccountable, she became the mistress of Antonio Perez, who had been one of Ruy's disciples in Pastrana, and was now acting as Philip's two secretaries of state.



FR. EHMANN has arranged to Ruy Gomez, his secretary of state. She was a dutiful and virtuous wife, and bore Ruy ten children. While she was still in her middle thirties, her husband died, and the grief-stricken widow retired to her estate at Pastrana, in a fever of frustration, she applied to St. Teresa for entrance into her convent, but the affair ended in a fiasco. As late Philip called her back to her place in Madrid. This unexpected and almost unaccountable, she became the mistress of Antonio Perez, who had been one of Ruy's disciples in Pastrana, and was now acting as Philip's two secretaries of state.

The Nelson continued for some time until Antonio came involved in the consequences of his assassination. Juan de Escovedo, which had been arranged with the knowledge of the King, was arrested at what he took to be an attempt to him, arrested Antonio and Ana, putting them in separate prisons. Ana was released from the dungeon, and conducted to her home in Pastrana, where she lived in house imprisonment until her death in 1582.

It is Miss O'Brien's remarkable achievement to have these historical events come alive, and to give a highly plausible sequence of motives and reactions to account for these strange criminal events. The result is a story of great dramatic power, in which the action is that of a clash of impetuous hearts and wills. This is hardly a stretch in the treatment of Philip's diplomacy, which does not play a part in the weaving of dramatic circumstances around Ana. It is all a very credit to the skill of the author's compression and reduction.

The author traces the Spanish spring of Ana's choice, first in her marriage, and second, in her destined sense of honor. From her childhood Ana was without one who she had lost in a child's game, the empty socket was always covered with a diamond patch of black satin. It was an onerous life, spent on the leading edge of the Spanish court, where she made her own life, and her husband was a shadow.

There is rigorous respect for decency and modesty in the telling of this story. It contains no sensational passages. The morality of the intention is evident in the title, borrowed from a line of Shakespeare, "For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?" And yet I hesitate to recommend it to anyone except the most careful and objective type of adult reader. The casual, careless reader could be easily misled by the author's intention, in which Ana emerges while she tries to balance her with the claims of conscience in holding on to her sin. I can fancy such readers finding here a justification of adultery. The book is not for them. It calls for wide-awake reading, alert to every turn of thought and nuance of expression. Only this will the reader follow without danger the intricate chess-play of Ana's heart with her "conscience" until she is encircled, and grace has its way.

It seems to me questionable whether the saintly Cardinal Quiroga, Primate of Spain, would have had such cordial relations with Ana during her imprisonment. Important though he is to help her understand her way back to God. Perhaps the records show that it was so, and I am being parsimonious. The scene of Antonio's last meeting with Ana before his escape into Aragón seems to confuse the Great Inquisitor's "besides their masters, there are also such quips here and there about carnal weakness which struck me as flippant and off key.

Serious readers will find this novel an absorbing drama of human conflict, in which the sumptuous atmosphere of Spain in its most splendid century is vividly re-created, and the dash of wit and heart is unfolded in brilliant and exciting conversation.

For One Sweet Grape by Kate O'Brien, 340 pages, New York: Doubleday, \$2.75.

New Historical Volume New York — (NC) — The 25th volume in the series of Historical Records and Studies of the United States Catholic Historical Society here has been published, the society announces, marking the 50th volume to be published by the society since its founding by Archbishop Richard J. Corrigan in 1884.

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## Information Desk

### Title of Monsignor

Readers desiring any information about Catholic history, doctrine, or practice should send their queries to the Information Desk, 3280 Lake Avenue, Rochester 12, N. Y. Moral problems should be presented to the priest in the confessional. Names should be signed to questions, although they will not be printed.

Would you explain just what it means to be a Monsignor that is, what does it signify, and what are the duties?

Monsignor is an Italian form of address which means, "My Lord." In times past it was customary in Italy to address persons high in rank or power, both laymen and prelates, with this title. Just the same as in English-speaking countries it is customary to address both nobles and bishops as "My Lord." The Holy See retains this usage which entitles prelates and those pertaining to the papal household, no matter what their nationality, to be called Monsignor, whether their office is an active one or merely honorary. The Pope does not appoint a Monsignor, but rather bestows an office or an honor to which the title of Monsignor is attached.

In the country the name is usually employed only by those who have received the distinction of being named auxiliary secretaries or prelates of the papal household. Since there are several such offices in the papal household, there are several such ranks to which a cleric can be elevated. The lowest of the honorary ranks normally granted is that of the private chamberlain. Its distinctive garb is purple cassock or surplice in steeple-crowned black biretta with purple piping. The title of such a chamberlain is "Very Reverend Monsignor." The next superior rank is that of "Domestic Prelate" the prelate of the papal household. The "choir" worn by such is the same as that of a bishop, except for the absence of crozier and ring, and other slight differences. The rank of such a prelate is "Right Reverend Monsignor." A third higher grade is that of Protosacerdos or archdeacon. His garb is the same as that of an ordinary domestic prelate, but the Protosacerdos is allowed on certain occasions the privilege of celebrating Pontifical High Mass.

I was surprised to read in a book which I have, that there have been two Negroes and one Japanese priest. With very few exceptions, there is nothing to prevent a Negro or a member of the yellow

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## New Club Offers Book by Dulles

Chicago-Avery Dulles' forthcoming book, "A Testimonial To Grace," is one of the October selections of the newly formed Thomas More Book Club, which is sponsored by the staff of the magazine "Books on Trial."

Mr. Dulles' recent decision to study for the priesthood aroused great interest because of his political and religious prominence of his father, John Foster Dulles, a Presbyterian, and chairman of an important committee on the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

The forthcoming book written while the Harvard graduate converted to the Catholic faith, traces the steps by which he advanced from the complacent indifference of the secular schools. It will be published in October by Sheed and Ward at \$1.50.

## Tells of Priests' Devotion 'Angel'

St. Nazian, Wis. — (NC) — The sixth booklet for promotion of the Priest's Saturday Devotion, entitled "Bertha Baumann," who became known as "the Little Guardian Angel" of the devotion, has been published here by the Salvatorian Fathers.

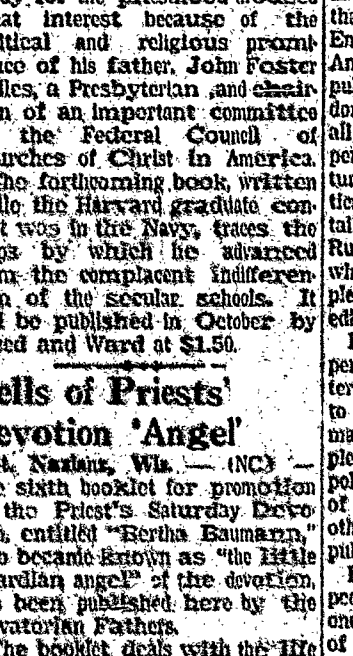
The booklet deals with the life of Bertha Baumann, who lived a helpless cripple at a home in Heidelberg-Schlierbach, Baden, Germany. She died at the age of 13, but shortly before her death she learned of the devotion and dedicated her last days on earth to its service.

The Priest's Saturday Devotion was inaugurated in 1935 by the Salvatorian Fathers with the blessing of Pope Pius XI and has spread throughout the world. The devotion, generally scheduled for the Saturday following the first Friday of each month, is for the intention of the sanctification of priests and students for the priesthood.

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VICTOR KRAVCHENKO New York, February 21, 1946

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