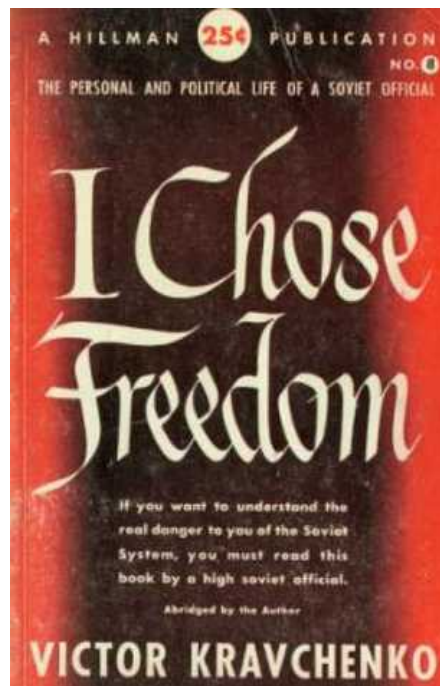




I Chose Freedom

Victor Kravchenko

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I Chose Freedom

Victor Kravchenko

I Chose Freedom Victor Kravchenko

I Chose Freedom is melodramatic in title only. It is the work of an average communist party member during the Stalin era. Kravchenko was a technocrat who miraculously cut through the totalitarian fabric of Stalinist ideology to demonstrate the bureaucratization of Soviet life and the annihilation of genuine intermediate social structures, such as families, trade unions, professional and religious organizations. If one is to acquire a real appreciation of the magnitude of changes underway in the Soviet Union, one must first review the actual character of the totalitarian inheritance.

I Chose Freedom Details

Date : Published January 1st 1988 by Routledge (first published 1946)

ISBN : 9780887387548

Author : Victor Kravchenko

Format : Paperback 516 pages

Genre : Cultural, Russia, Nonfiction, History, Politics, Biography, Autobiography

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From Reader Review I Chose Freedom for online ebook

Katie Mcsweeney says

Most eye opening part of this read was the way he describes how huge European and US misconceptions about life within the USSR were. Also a great description of how the slow realisation of Kravchenko about the true nature of Stalin's regime. Oh and where were all the female comrades in the top echelons...?

Mohamed Fares says

This book was my grandfather's gift to my mom ,Reading such a heritage meant a lot to me especially when it belongs to a dear person ,.

Travis says

Fantastic. It is an autobiography. Stalin is 10x Hitler. The closed society was very good at turning their own people against each other and creating such an environment of fear that nobody would dare speak out against the most insidious decisions from Moscow. I would read this again, and recommend it to anyone.

Nataliya Borys says

A must-read and a life-changer. Reading this book was really scary. After this book, nothing can make you like Stalin and the Soviet Union.

Kravchenko was one of the first defectors from the Soviet Union, persecuted, he killed himself in the USA. A powerful first-hand account of an apparatchik who survived the multiple Stalinist purges of the Communist party and Soviet leadership replete with echoes of words from the contemporary leftist political ranks uttered unknowingly of their prior life at the murderous hands of Josef Stalin.

A story like this was being heard in the West for the first time, and lead to a large libel trial in France, but it was corroborated by numerous others.

Pat Schakelvoort says

Kravchenko was one of the first defectors from the Soviet Union, in a time when defecting from the Soviet Union wasn't cool.

It doesn't bring any new information on the situation in the Soviet Union, but it does point out a lot of the Soviet bureaucracy as well.

In the last pages it does point out the American handling of the relations with the Soviet Union during the

Gary Sudeth says

A powerful first-hand account of an apparatchik who survived the multiple Stalinist purges of the Communist party and Soviet leadership replete with echoes of words from the contemporary leftist political ranks uttered unknowingly of their prior life at the murderous hands of Josef Stalin.

An important book for the reasonably well-informed reader interested in the manifestation of man's nature unbridled by the checks and balances of other men.

Jan Mech says

Skv?lé ?tení, ...když cht?j v?d?t, jací jsou komunisti.

Renee says

A scary little book about being a Russian throughout the communist regime.

Kateryna Martynenko says

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Leonardo says

La suerte de Victor Kravchenko –el diplomático soviético que, en 1944, desertó mientras estaba en Nueva York y luego escribió sus famosas memorias, *I Chose Freedom*– merece mencionarse aquí. Su libro, escrito en primera persona, fue el primer informe importante sobre los horrores del estalinismo, empezando con un detallado relato de la colectivización forzosa y del hambre en Ucrania, donde el propio Kravchenko –a principios de la década de los treinta todavía un verdadero creyente del sistema– participó en la imposición de la colectivización. La historia más conocida sobre Kravchenko acaba en 1949, cuando ganó en París un gran juicio contra sus acusadores soviéticos, quienes incluso habían llevado a su exmujer ante el tribunal para testificar sobre su corrupción y alcoholismo y dejar constancia de su violencia doméstica. Lo que no es tan conocido es que, inmediatamente después de su victoria, mientras estaba siendo ensalzado como un héroe de la Guerra Fría, Kravchenko se mostró profundamente preocupado por la anticomunista caza de brujas de McCarthy, y advirtió de que, utilizando semejantes métodos para combatir el estalinismo, Estados Unidos corría el riesgo de parecerse a su oponente. También se mostró crecientemente consciente de las injusticias de las democracias liberales, y su deseo por ver cambios en la sociedad occidental llegó a convertirse en casi una obsesión.

Después de escribir una secuela mucho menos popular de su *I Chose Freedom*, significativamente titulada *I Chose Justice*, Kravchenko emprendió una cruzada para encontrar un nuevo modo de organizar la producción que fuera menos explotador. Esto le condujo a Bolivia, donde invirtió su dinero en organizar a los agricultores pobres en nuevos colectivos. Aplastado por el fracaso de estas empresas, se retiró a la soledad y finalmente se pegó un tiro en su casa de Nueva York. Su suicidio fue la consecuencia de su desesperación, no de algún chantaje del KGB; prueba de que su denuncia de la Unión Soviética había sido un genuino acto de protesta contra la injusticia.

Primero como tragedia después como farsa Pág.100

Fred says

Another eye-opening account of life in the USSR under Stalin

Rachel Hirstwood says

Please note - I read an abridged version of the book - only 240 pages not 560.

I chose freedom, despite it's dreadful cover and the smell of dust emanating from my copy, was such a powerful book. It is the life of Victor Kravchenko. He describes how he became involved in the communist party and eventually became a most trusted member of the Soviet government.

I would love to quote big sections of the book, but I will try and resist. Kravchenko was born in the Ukraine (when it was part of Tsarist Russia), and had a revolutionary father who spent many years in prison. But

Kravchenko inherited a basic socialist ideal from him.

As Kravchenko grew up he became involved in the youth communist party, and then was accepted into the party proper when he was in twenties. Since Kravchenko had some agricultural experience (growing up in the countryside) he was sent out to supervise the collectivisation of farming. It was perhaps here, that Kravchenko has his first doubts about the party as he saw for himself that collectivisation had a result of famine and death. He says "we denounced as 'anti-soviet rumours' what we knew as towering fact".

Despite these doubts Kravchenko stays in the party - indeed, what choice did he have, you don't leave the party. And the book continues to describe the years of Stalin's purges (cleansing the Soviet Communist Party from within), forced labour camps, child forced labour... The list is sickening and seemingly endless.

In chapter 13 he describes a new rule to be enforced - if a worker (who lives in barracks that he/she shares with up to 350 other people along with bedbugs and lice and vermin) is 20 minutes late for work, they will be sent for trial and sentenced to forced labour or if it's their third offence, they will be killed. I came across this rule in Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*, and *A Day in the Life...* To be honest I was unsure whether to believe the reason why a sick worker wouldn't go to the doctor to be excused work. Here is the answer. If the worker queued to see the doctor it could make them late for work, if the doctor then said they were fit for work, then they were in for forced labour in Siberia or worse.

By the time the USSR was brought into the second world war with Hitler invading them (despite their friendship pact), the Soviet Union was woefully unprepared. Kravchenko is promoted to the government level of the Party to oversee the production of equipment for the war effort. He describes the luxuries available to his level of government, while the citizens/peasants are starving and living in shared barrack huts. But he also describes how in his position he has all the responsibility and no ability to share his load downwards. He is constantly monitored by the NKVD (secret police) both at home and at work they search his possessions his furniture, looking for anything incriminating.

Eventually as the Soviet Union cannot produce munitions quickly enough, they enter into an agreement with the USA to be supplied with raw materials and products. Here Kravchenko sees his chance to get away. He is sent to oversee the acquisition of products under the agreement, and after seven months, manages to defect.

I read this book after it was mentioned by Doris Lessing in her autobiography. She said it would change anyone's view if they were pro-communist, and she is right. Despite having studied Stalin's policies for myself many years ago, I still have a communist leaning - one that I know in my heart is naive, knowing that power corrupts, and knowing the evidence of every country that has tried communism has become a dictatorship totalitarian state - which wasn't the point of communism, but always the result. I am glad to have read this side of the story. I have read all of Solzhenitsyn's books (still can't spell his name though!), and I've read a lot of books by various workers and prisoners of the Soviet regime, but this is the first I have read by someone in the regime, and I am impressed by his candour, and thoroughly disgusted and upset by his description of life under Stalin. Unfortunately I can also quite believe that the story has been sanitised to an extent for the mass market.

Lawrence says

I Chose Freedom is melodramatic in title only. It is the work of an average communist party member during the Stalin era. Kravchenko was a technocrat who miraculously cut through the totalitarian fabric of Stalinist

ideology to demonstrate the bureaucratization of Soviet life and the annihilation of genuine intermediate social structures, such as families, trade unions, professional and religious organizations. If one is to acquire a real appreciation of the magnitude of changes underway in the Soviet Union, one must first review the actual character of the totalitarian inheritance.

Jerianna says

This is a life-changer. It is well-written and compelling and made me really think about things that I take for granted. It also made me worry for our country, and the freedoms that we throw away for "Our Piece of the Pie".

It is so hard to regain freedoms once lost.

I got frustrated by the author's choices sometimes, but can't judge--I've always enjoyed freedom, safety, and plenty.

Doug Hauser says

Should be a must read for all those who are enamored with Socialism & Communism.

Kitty Red-Eye says

<http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSk...>

Abeer Galal says

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